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ABSTRACT

This study, fifth in a series of seven, was written by two second grade teachers in different schools who participated in a research project addressing the problem of coping with disruptive behavior in the classroom. The instructional environments of each school and classroom as well as the characteristics of the teachers and their pupils are described. The type of distractions encountered by the teachers are described and a discussion is presented on coping techniques used and their comparative effectiveness. Included in the appendices are the distraction classification system, the coping technique classification system, a sample of the teacher's daily response form, and a quantitative checklist. (JD)

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COPING WITH CLASSROOM DISTRACTIONS

TEACHER CASE STUDY

Teachers C & Y Perspective
Second Grade Classrooms

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Report IR&DT 79-5

This study was prepared and written by the San Diego IR&DT team. No authorship is claimed by FWL.

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MAR 7 1980

PREFACE

Teacher C, who participated in the project from its beginning, wrote the majority of this case study over a four-month period after the data had been collected. Teacher Y, who was recruited to aid in expanding the data base, became involved in the project just before the data were collected in her classroom. Both teachers participated in the intervention meetings and created plans for modifying their coping style.

Teacher Y's portions of this case study, which include her Context Information, her Intervention Plans and Results, and her Insights, were all written by a writer who had not been involved until the writing phase of the project. Teacher Y expressed her descriptions, insights, and conclusions to him, and she also edited the final copy. The remainder of this document was written by Teacher C.

Teacher C wishes to thank the Far West Laboratory for allowing her to participate in this project and for giving her the opportunity to see how important a teacher can be in educational research. Teacher C also wishes to express her appreciation to the whole San Diego IR & DT Team for their warmth and friendship during the whole project, with special gratitude to the researcher and trainer for helping to keep the group "on task."

A very special thanks must go to Teacher C's Aide #1 and the boys and girls in Room 8 for their patience in coping with all the logistics that were necessary to deal with during the course of this project. All students names included in the ethnographic excerpts (in italics) have been replaced by pseudonyms to maintain anonymity.

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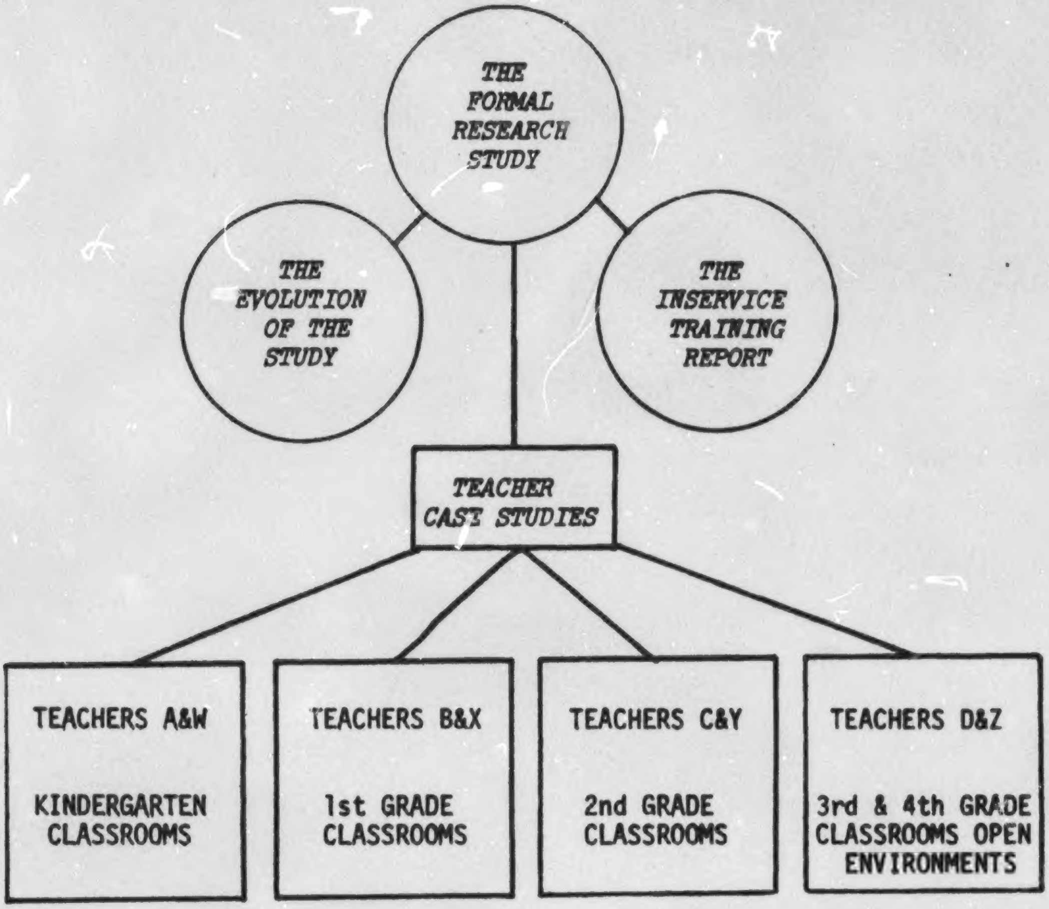
INTRODUCTION

Perspective of This Study

The case study which follows is one of a set of studies describing research conducted by the San Diego Interactive Research & Development on Teaching Team (IR & DT). The cluster of studies which presents the IR & DT team's findings regarding *Coping with Classroom Distractions* is graphically illustrated below.


THE FORMAL RESEARCH STUDY
THE EVOLUTION OF THE STUDY
THE INSERVICE TRAINING REPORT
TEACHER CASE STUDIES
TEACHERS A&W
KINDERGARTEN CLASSROOMS
TEACHERS B&X
1st GRADE CLASSROOMS
TEACHERS C&Y
2nd GRADE CLASSROOMS
TEACHERS D&Z
3rd & 4th GRADE CLASSROOMS OPEN ENVIRONMENTS

The Formal Research Study provides a formal presentation of a typical research report (i.e., purpose of study, review of literature, methodology, findings, conclusions and recommendations).

The Evolution of the Study provides a chronological development of the evolution of the study from the initial identification of the problem to the write-ups of the findings (from the IR & DT team's perspective).

The Inservice Training Report details the activities undertaken in an inservice class offered by the trainer/developer and a preliminary evaluation of the impact of the class upon the participants.

The Teacher Case Studies (4) provide discussions of findings, conclusions, and insights from the perspective of the teachers who participated in the study. Detailed context descriptions of the instructional environments and teaching styles should permit readers to identify those teacher case studies which seem most relevant.

This cluster approach to presenting information should permit the reader to peruse those studies which he/she determines are most relevant. Hence, the disparate needs and interests of a variety of readers will be satisfied.

In an attempt to minimize the redundancy of describing certain procedures, most operational activities (e.g., the selection and training of the classroom observers) and methodological procedures (e.g., data collection methods) have been omitted or described briefly in this document. The reader seeking detailed descriptions of the study's methodology should review *The Formal Research Study* or *The Evolution of the Study* documents. For the reader planning to read only this case study, a brief overview of IR & DT, the general context of the study, the question identified for study, and the data collection procedures are provided below.

OVERVIEW

In the first newsletter describing* the existence of two IR & DT studies, the following description was provided:

> Interactive Research and Development on Teaching (IR & DT) is an R & D strategy that places teachers, researchers, and trainer/developers together to inquire as a team into those questions, problems, and concerns of the classroom teacher. Decisions are made collaboratively regarding research issues and strategies and the concurrent development of training that grows from research. Each member of an IR & DT team has parity and shares equal responsibility for decisions made by the team, from identification of the question/problem to the completion of all resultant R & D activities.

The members of the IR & DT team conducting this study were all employees of the San Diego Unified School District. The original team was comprised of four elementary school teachers, a researcher, and a trainer/developer. Three of the teachers were colleagues at a relatively small K-6 school with a faculty of 15. They taught in Grades K, 1, and 2. The school's student population was approximately 400; 75 percent Black, 20 percent Hispanic, 3 percent Asian, and 2 percent White. Thirty-two of these children were involved in the English as a Second Language Program (ESL), and over 85 percent of the school's children were eligible for a federally funded free lunch program. The fourth teacher, who team-taught a third-fourth grade class of 60 students, was on the staff of a very large K-6 school (40 teachers) located in a suburban middle-class area. The student population was 1,200; 77 percent White, 11 percent Hispanic, 9 percent Asian, and 3 percent Black.

The researcher was recruited from the evaluation services office

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Interactive Research & Development on Teaching, Far West Laboratory, San Francisco, Volume 1, Number 1, October 1977.

of the school district and he had previously been involved in conducting evaluations of various state and federally funded programs. The trainer/developer previously was attached to the district's staff development office as a resource teacher providing inservice education to teachers. The six members of the IR & DT were Far West Laboratory personnel recruited during the spring semester preceding the study.

Prior to data collection (in February 1978), an additional set of four teachers was recruited to expand the data base. These teachers were selected so that their environmental characteristics (e.g., grade levels, school and student demographics) were similar to the original four IR & DT teachers.

The question identified by the San Diego IR & DT was: *"What are the events which disrupt classroom instruction, and what are the most effective techniques teachers use to cope with these distractions?"* A distraction was defined as an event or stimulus which interrupts the teacher's actions or the intended flow of instruction.

Eight observers were employed and trained to assist in the data collection phase of the study. Two were assigned to observe the classrooms of each participating teacher on nine different occasions. One observer used a checklist to classify the specific distractions and corresponding coping techniques used by the teacher. This observer also rated the effect of the techniques on the distractions (Quantitative Observer). The other observer took detailed notes on all that occurred during each observation period (Ethnographic Observer). Each classroom teacher responded to a set of questions following each of the nine occasions she was observed (Teacher Daily Log).

The eight primary grade classrooms were observed on nine occasions each, spread over six weeks of instruction. The observations were during the reading period (or reading readiness for kindergarten) and, typically, were slightly less than one hour in duration.

Two quantitative classification schemes were developed by the IR & DT team--one explicating anticipated distraction categories, and the other classifying coping techniques. Besides classifying the distractions and the corresponding coping techniques which were exercised, the quantitative observer rated the effectiveness of the relationship of each particular coping technique in response to a specific distraction (distraction-coping linkage). Effectiveness of the distraction-coping linkages was rated with respect to: (1) the instructional time lost due to the distraction, (2) the degree of disjointedness of the instructional activity (interruption of instructional flow), and (3) the degree to which the distraction persisted after a coping technique had been utilized.

Each of the eight classroom teachers participated in two data-reviewing sessions between the sixth and seventh observations. These sessions were intended to provide feedback on the preliminary data which had been collected during the first six observations. The participants of the study identified specific techniques which appeared to be functional, and the teachers developed plans to modify their coping styles ("Intervention Plans").

The pages which follow describe the study from the teachers' perspective. As mentioned earlier, more detailed information regarding the research methodology may be bound in other documents. Passages typed in *italics* are verbatim comments taken from ethnographic observational notes. To maintain anonymity, all names in the ethnographic notes have been replaced with fictitious pseudonyms.

CONTEXT INFORMATION

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT - TEACHER C

The Community

School H is one of 121 elementary schools (kindergarten through sixth grade) located in San Diego, California. Upon the first view of School H, the site emits an immediate feeling of separation from the local neighborhoods due to the open spaces surrounding the facility. Embankments and/or grassy canyons enclose the school on all sides.

Facing south, the front of the school looks beyond the access street and bordering ravine to a bus rental company's large dirt parking lot, and light industrial facilities. A main thoroughfare is seen along the east face of School H, past a large embankment and small apartment complex. The access road to the school stems from this busy four-lane avenue at an intersection with no traffic signal to allow easy or safe entry.

To the west and to the north beyond a dry weed-ridden canyon and a high embankment, respectively, are tract homes from which the school population is partially drawn. The homes to the west are, for the most part, poorly maintained, with many boarded and barred windows, graffiti-covered walls, and unkempt yards. Intermixed within these streets, however, are contrastingly well-kept homes. Looking to the north, beyond a blacktop playground and the embankment, backs of homes border a dried grassy strip and a fence which separate them from the school. This neighborhood of homes, in contrast to the western area, has well-cared-for, modest homes, with unkempt ones interspersed throughout.

The School

School H consists of two rows of single-story buildings set on different levels. Ramps lead from one building, which contains the office, cafeteria, and auditorium, to the other building, where 16 of the 18 classrooms are located (see Figure 1). Four of these 16 rooms are portables. Surrounding the classrooms on three sides are playgrounds, two of which are covered with gravel, and one of which is paved with asphalt with individual play areas designated with white paint.

In contrast to the surrounding neighborhood, the buildings, stuccoed in light earth-toned colors, are clean and well maintained. Between the two rows of the buildings small grassy areas, with shrubbery bordering them, are neatly trimmed. Because the site has been designated as a magnet school for the school district's integration program for the following school year, some capital outlay moneys have been allotted for special refurbishing. However, changes appeared minor, perhaps because the grounds and buildings have been so well maintained to begin with.

The appearance of School H, as well as its internal workings, is orderly and stable. The school emits a feeling of safety and friendliness due to the deep concern of staff to make it so. School H is a community of students and staff with a caring nature prevailing, which is in sharp contrast to the lack of upkeep in many areas around the school.

There were 362 students enrolled in School H at the beginning of the 1977-78 school year. Within three weeks, this number had climed to 392, and during the year reached a high of 448. Because of these changes in the enrollment, classes were reorganized twice during the year. This constant movement resulted in a transiency rate of 49 percent for the year. This

FIGURE 1

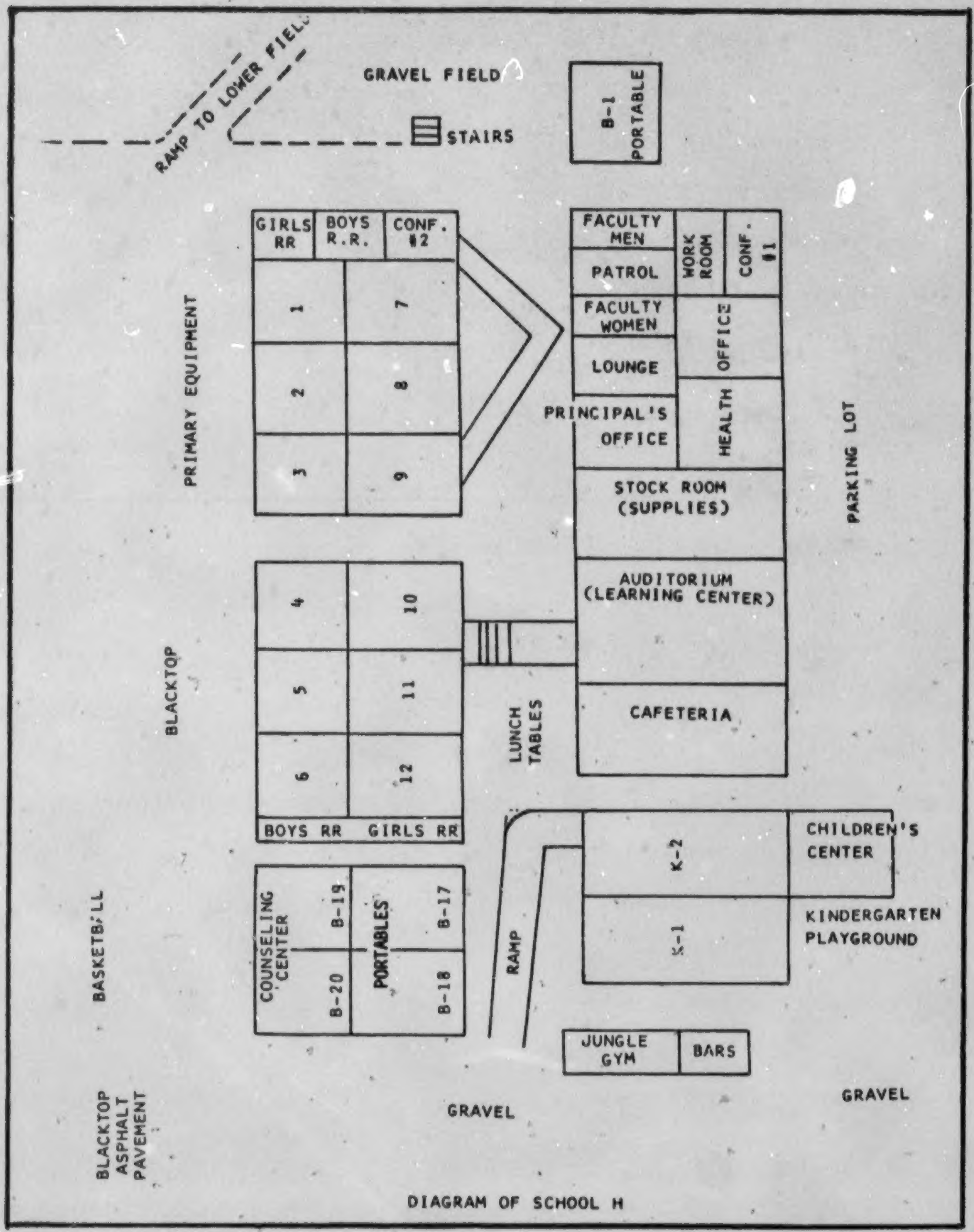

RAMP TO LOWER FIELD
GRAVEL FIELD
STAIRS
B-1 PORTABLE
GIRLS RR
BOYS R.R.
CONF. #2
1
2
3
7
8
9
FACULTY MEN
PATROL
FACULTY WOMEN
LOUNGE
PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE
WORK ROOM
CONF. #1
OFFICE
HEALTH
STOCK ROOM (SUPPLIES)
AUDITORIUM (LEARNING CENTER)
CAFETERIA
PARKING LOT
PRIMARY EQUIPMENT
4
5
6
10
11
12
BOYS RR
GIRLS RR
BLACKTOP
LUNCH TABLES
K-2
K-1
CHILDREN'S CENTER
KINDERGARTEN PLAYGROUND
RAMP
COUNSELING CENTER
B-19
B-20
PORTABLES
B-17
B-18
BASKETBALL
JUNGLE GYM
BARS
GRAVEL
GRAVEL
BLACKTOP ASPHALT PAVEMENT

DIAGRAM OF SCHOOL H

indicated that out of every three students who attended School H, only two were enrolled for the entire school year.

The ethnic makeup of the school population consisted of 19.5 percent Hispanic, 2.0 percent White, 75.3 percent Black, and 3.2 percent Asian. Thirty-two of these children were involved in the English as a Second Language Program (ESL), 339 of the children at School H were eligible for the free breakfast and lunch program, and 53 were eligible for a reduced-price lunch, all of which were provided by federal funds for students from low-income families.

The school was also involved in the Early Childhood Education program (ECE) and compensatory education programs (SB 90, Title I, Follow Through, and Miller-Unruh Reading). These programs provided special funds to enable School H to hire more aides and a reading teacher, increase the nurse time, initiate a counseling center and a learning center, and purchase more equipment and supplies for the school.

The faculty of School H was made up of a principal, 17 teachers, a counselor, and a Miller-Unruh reading teacher. The principal and three teachers were Black, the counselor and one teacher were Hispanic, and the rest of the teachers were White.

There were also a number of aides at the school. Eighteen were considered full time (three-six hours per day) and eleven worked less frequently (one-three hours per day). Nineteen of the aides were Black, one was Hispanic, and nine were White.

The faculty at School H appeared to be a conscientious, well-organized, and cohesive group. Support from each member of the staff was evident. Factors such as the principal's good management techniques and an increase in the amount of aide time contributed to the stability and organization that is felt at the site.

Another part of this stability came from the counseling center, which was run by the full-time counselor in a portable classroom. Center personnel provided such services as handling crisis situations, making home visits, supplying areas for students to be alone, and offering general counseling. The center added an additional dimension to School H and furnished another supportive resource for the staff to rely upon and utilize.

Teacher C's Classroom

In February when the observations began, Teacher C's classroom was arranged functionally for a maximum of work efficiency and flow of traffic. The students' desks, which seat two, were clustered so that six students were assigned to sit together in close proximity. There were five such clusters (see Figure 2). Three desks were arranged separately along the windows to accommodate individual students.

One other cluster of desks was used as an activity area. This area could seat nine students and was used as a listening post or an area to do pencil-paper activities. Close to this activity table another group of desks was used by the full-time aide for the purpose of working with small groups of children. This work area was between the sink-storage space and the teacher's desk and cabinets. These cabinets consisted of a large cupboard area where papers, supplies, books, and play equipment were kept. The desk area was covered in a fairly organized manner with papers, a brightly covered file box, and various stacks of books.

Bookshelves were located throughout the room and were used for books,

FIGURE 2

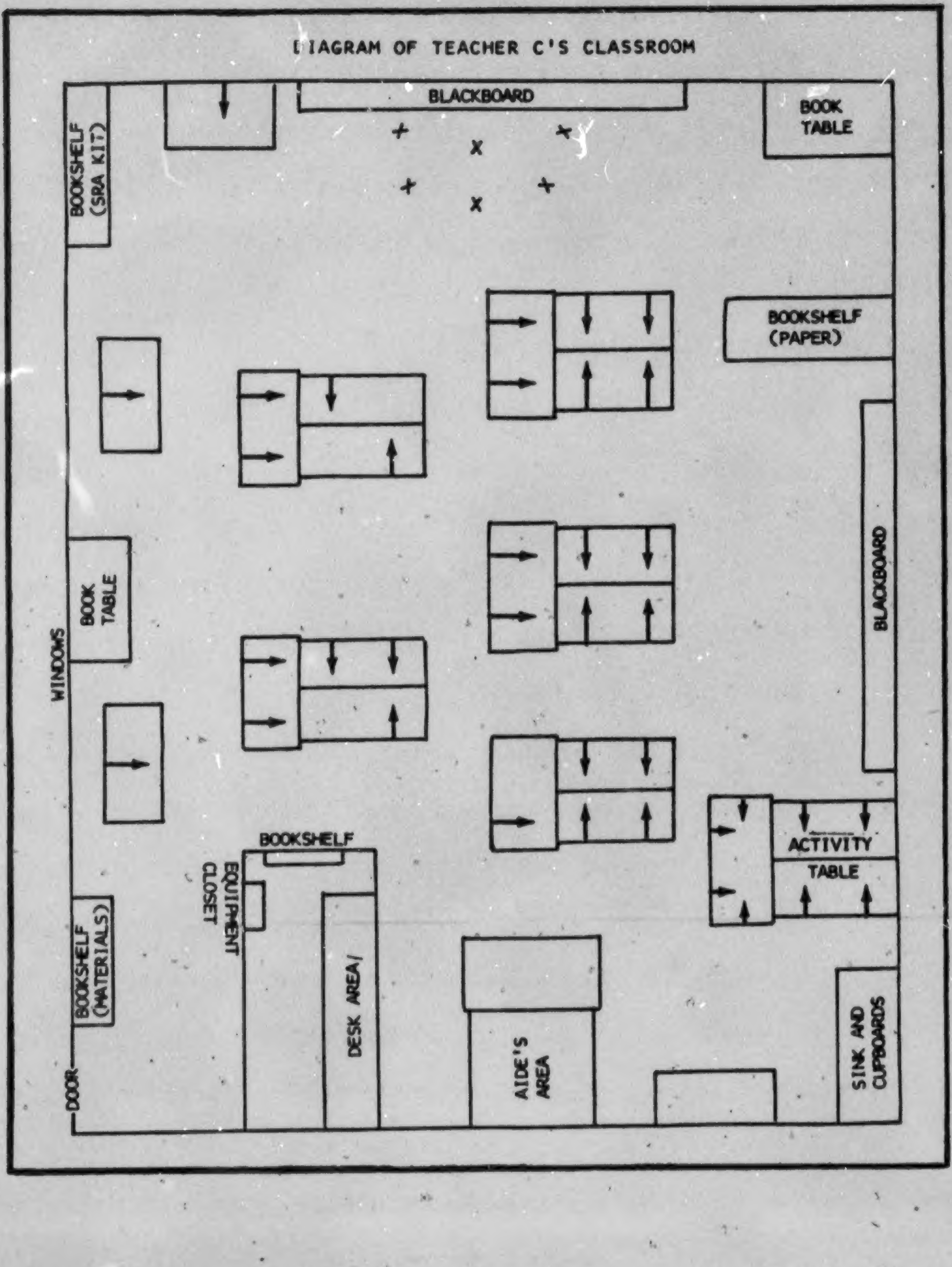


DIAGRAM OF TEACHER C'S CLASSROOM
BLACKBOARD
BOOK TABLE
BOOKSHELF (SRA KIT)
BOOKSHELF (PAPER)
BOOK TABLE
WINDOWS
BLACKBOARD
ACTIVITY TABLE
BOOKSHELF
EQUIPMENT CLOSET
BOOKSHELF (MATERIALS)
DESK AREA/
AIDE'S AREA
SINK AND CUPBOARDS
DOOR

games, blank paper, and teaching materials. Between two of these bookshelves at one end of the room, the reading circle was set up with chairs where the teacher instructed individual groups. The teacher, with her back to the chalk ledge, faced the rest of the classroom. Materials that the teacher used for the reading instruction were kept on the ledge for easy access.

Materials on the walls made the room bright and cheerful. On the front blackboard was a poster entitled, "Our Civil Rights." This contained a message stating how each member of the class could expect to be treated and how they should treat others. Above this blackboard were chalk drawings that were done by the students in Teacher C's class.

Continuing around the room, across the upper portion of two walls were two number lines, one from zero to 60, the other from zero to 120. Along one of these same walls were alphabet cards that showed the correct form of each letter, both capital and small. Below these strips a chart contained the caption, "When is your birthday?" On this chart the months were listed and little cakes, each with a student's name and birthday, were placed alongside the appropriate month. On the chalkboard near this chart the names of the reading groups, and the order of the activities in which each group participated were written on construction paper and hung so all could see.

The five bulletin boards around the room added to the liveliness of the environment. Above one of the book tables in one corner of the room, February holiday motifs were displayed with bright book covers and a heading encouraging students to read. Immediately adjacent to this was a board with a decorative calendar with more holiday designs around it. Hearts were hung in each space to signify the correct date. Names of room helpers were also designated on a chart on this same bulletin board.

The next board, on the other side of the blackboard at the front of the room, contained a display of cats with the titles "Color Cats" and "Gatos Colerados." Each cat was labeled appropriately with its color name in English and in Spanish. At the back of the room between the sink and desk area a large bulletin board, with the caption "Hooray for good work," displayed students' names on cards and an example of good work underneath the appropriate name. The bulletin board in the opposite corner of the room (next to the birthday chart) contained amusing animals under the heading, "Short Vowels." These animals held printed rules about when short vowels occurred in words as well as funny sentences using words with short vowels in them.

CHARACTERISTICS OF PARTICIPANTS

The Students

At the time the observations for this study were begun (late February, 1978), Teacher C's second grade class consisted of 29 children; 16 boys and 13 girls. Twenty-two of these students were Black, five were Hispanic, one was White, and one was Asian. Two of the students were non-English speaking (NES) upon their arrival at School H and participated in an ESL (English as a Second Language) program. One spoke Spanish; one spoke Laotian.

At the time of the third observation, one girl was added and the next day one boy moved. Between the sixth and the seventh observation, when the school was reorganized due to increased enrollment, four boys in Teacher C's class were transferred to another class within School H. This decreased the enrollment in the class to 25.

The majority of the students in Teacher C's class were achieving below grade level academically in the area of reading. Informal tests were administered at the beginning of the school year by Teacher C to determine each child's reading level. By February, six students were reading at the second grade level, with the rest of the class ranging from readiness to primer levels. By the end of the observational period, the readiness group was transferred to another classroom when the school was reorganized. This left students ranging from pre-primer to high second grade levels. All students were grouped according to their reading ability and were moved accordingly as they progressed.

Eleven students in Teacher C's class were involved in the Miller-Unruh Reading Program. Students were recommended by the teacher to receive this extra assistance from a reading specialist. The eleven children were then placed in small groups according to their skill level. Each child had a specific time when he or she was "pulled out" of the classroom to receive instruction from the reading specialist and met in a group with her for 30 minutes each day.

Some of the factors that related to the low academic achievement of the students in Teacher C's class included a high absentee rate and a lack, in some cases, of parental support of school programs. Despite the problem of absenteeism, students easily fit into the general classroom routine, were orderly, and were basically respectful of each other's space and the teacher. Individuals were friendly toward one another which kept student-to-student altercations to a minimum. For the most part, the group, as a whole, was enthusiastic about being in the class and about completing their work.

Teacher C

Teacher C began teaching at School H in the fall of 1976 and had been there two years at the time the observations were made. Immediately after receiving her B.A. and teaching credential from the University of California at Riverside, she began teaching at a Children's Center for the San Diego Unified School District before transferring to School H a year later. At this center, she primarily dealt with pre-school age children.

Teacher C, in her mid-twenties, was tall, slender, well-groomed, and had a healthy appearance. She exhibited vitality and a sense of humor when dealing with the students. Much of this was expressed through her eyes and facial expressions.

Organization, awareness, and warmth seemed to best describe the teaching style of Teacher C. Teacher C took pride in running an efficient, well-organized classroom in which a stable environment was created. Because of the unstable and transient homes that many of the children came from, Teacher C attempted to create a safe, structured situation for the students to work within, so that each child felt secure about his or her space in the classroom. Even if they were absent for several days, the students would know that their spaces would still be intact and the routine would be similar upon their return.

This routine insured that the children knew specifically when and where they were supposed to be and what they were to do. Teacher C spent the first 15 minutes of each reading period distributing and explaining work to students so that they knew what their assignments were for the period. At the reading circle the teacher had her materials prepared and available for use so that a minimal amount of movement by her was necessary.

This definite structure, planning, and organization was intended to keep the distractions and problems to a minimum.

Because of this structure, Teacher C was able to exhibit a strong awareness of all activities within the room. It was important to her to know that each child was doing what was expected of him or her at all times. Many times during the observations the teacher looked up from her instruction of her small groups and directed students to behave as she desired. This was evident during the seventh observation, when the following was noted by the observers:

> *Alan knocks his chair down. The teacher looks up. At 38 minutes (38th minute of observation), the teacher collects the workbooks from the students at the circle. She puts them on the ledge. She takes a set of flashcards that are on a ring and they start taking turns going around the circle saying the word. She tells the group how good Samuel and Linda were yesterday, that they went all the way through the whole set and that they are going to do the same thing today. A girl comes to the teacher and asks if she can leave the room. The teacher nods. They take turns around the circle. Linda is disturbing and the teacher calls her name. The group is attentive and looking at the word as each child has his/her turn. The teacher calls Ann's and Lucy's names and she frowns at them. They are at the listening post area and they have built a fence of books. She says, "Ann, put them down, open a book and read, please." Aide #2 is helping Alan directly behind the reading circle. He falls off his chair again. The teacher looks up and frowns at him. She says, "Why don't you sit on your bottom and that won't happen." At 42 minutes, the group is continuing with the flashcards around the circle. She takes a workbook away from Samuel and he voluntarily hands her his eraser. She laughs. The group that is working with Aide #2 is noisy but they are having a good time playing "Around the World." This does not seem to disturb the class. At 45 minutes, the teacher calls Daniel's name and points to him to sit down.*

Teacher C held high expectations for each student, both for work and for behavior. However, these expectations were not so high as to discourage the students or so easy as to bore them. Their work was carefully geared to their ability, with challenges interwoven into each activity. Each day the students were expected to correct any items missed from the day before and then complete the present day's assignment. At the reading circle, Teacher C expected attention from each student so that the instructional time was maximized. Teacher C sat close enough to each student so that she could touch them to remind them to listen and pay attention. During this reading time, Teacher C showed interest in each individual by questioning, by encouraging questions, and by giving clear explanations and directions. These characteristics were seen in the first observation when teacher says to the reading group:

> *"Sit up, ready to listen." She has some flashcards for them to read. A girl comes to the circle and asks the teacher a question. The teacher says, "No." She has asked her about a pencil. She tells the girl, "Did you look in the can?" She says this two times. The teacher continues with the reading circle, moving around the circle with flashcards. There is a jingling sound. She says, "Do you have bells on your shoes, Larry?" and smiles. Larry does have bells on his shoes. She puts her hand on Frank's knee to stop him from wiggling. She calls David's name sharply because he is not ready when it is his turn. She tells Michael, "I hope we are not going to have to go back to our seats. Michael, this is reading time. It's your turn now." She tells David to look up here. She continues around the circle again. The teacher says, "Very good," to Michael when he gets a word correct. She helps each child sound out the word if he/she does not know it. She tells Elaine, "Very good." The teacher looks sternly at the boys in the circle who are talking. Frank is having trouble with the word "Jill." David asks the teacher if she is going to put "ill" on the board. The teacher laughs and says, "How many times have we had to do that?" Now Frank gets the joke and he gets the word. They all laugh. She continues around the circle with the flashcards. Larry is wiggling. She puts her hand on his knee. She calls Michael's name loudly, twice, and puts her hand on his knee. He is turned around looking at the numbers board. She asks him, "What time is this?" She tells him that he can look at the numbers board when it is arithmetic time. She is encouraging the group with smiles and questions.*

Within this environment of structure and high expectation there was a warmth and closeness that pervaded. Teacher C smiled, laughed, and talked easily with students in each reading group. She used her sense of humor to enliven the instructional period and to capture each student's attention. One such instance occurred during the seventh observation when Teacher C was at the reading circle.

> *At the seventeenth minute of the observation, the teacher says to turn to page 111 and they continue with the same type of exercise. She is helping Victoria and Derek is trying to get her attention. The teacher says, "111," and continues with the words on that page. When they get to the word "quite," she says, "'Quite' is Derek's favorite word." He wants to know why. She laughs and shows him a paper from his folder, where he has missed this word three times. The teacher and students laughed together.*

Another occurred in the first observation:

> *David moves from his chair at the circle to the chalkboard ledge. He is trying to take something. The teacher holds her hand up to send him back and says, "David." The teacher says, teasingly, "David is being such a pickpocket today we're not even going to give him a turn."*

Through this humor and friendliness a general respect among class members was promoted. Teacher C treated each student with this respect by exhibiting politeness and kindness. Teacher C readily admitted any mistakes that she made and apologized for them.

Within this friendly environment, definite limits were set so that the students, as stated previously, knew their rights and responsibilities. Teacher C complimented the students to reinforce good behavior so that the students knew when she was pleased. Some examples of her compliments follow:

> *The teacher says, "Larry, you've been sitting and waiting nicely."*
>
> *The teacher says, "Daniel, you've been so nice, keep it up."*
>
> *Kevin reminds the teacher that she has not set the timer bell. The teacher says, "Thank you, Kevin. What would I do without you?"*

> *She says, "I really like the way Samuel is reading today. He is going to be on top of my good citizens' list."*
>
> *She tells Grace at the circle, "Very nice sentence. Great."*
>
> *The teacher says to the class, "You are nice and quiet; I like the way you are reading."*

When the students forgot the standards of the room, Teacher C used a variety of techniques to remind them. She questioned, "Where are you supposed to be?" or "Is that part of being a good citizen?" She reminded them positively by saying, "Let's see how nicely you can go back to your seats," or "See how quietly you can work." Another method she used was to make short comments or name a student to call attention to the fact that a change in behavior was necessary.

To prevent distractions and problems from occurring, Teacher C used a variety of management strategies. She organized the room so that maximum flow and efficiency was maintained. This was done by separating work areas to discourage noise and congestion problems. She held her reading circle at one end of the room with her aide at the opposite end, so that nearly all of the class was visible to both of them. The rotation of the reading groups was such that each group alternated working with an adult and then in a less supervised activity. In this way, fewer problems would occur as a result of students being on their own for a long period of time.

Teacher C also spent time planning each day's lessons so that she was prepared and organized for each group. The days were structured so that each person, whether it be an aide, a tutor, or a student, knew what to do and when. Clear directions were given so that each task was understood.

Seat work in individual folders was passed out to all students before they left the reading circle so that they knew exactly what to do at their seats. Work was geared so that a child had enough time, but not so much time as to cause problems. Teacher C also tried to make it a point to remind the students what to do if they had a question while at their seats and what they could do if they finished their assignment early. This was done often so as to refresh the students' memories of what was acceptable to do when they were at their seats. The following examples were taken from the ethnographic notes:

> *The teacher goes on to another table. She is distributing folders and worksheets to this table now. She says, "When you get done, you may read your books," and she gives a few individual instructions around the table.*
>
> *She distributes worksheets to the five at the circle. She asks them, "What do you do on this page?" One boy reads the directions and the teacher explains how they will do the paper at their seats. As she passes them their folders, she tells them if they have any other work to catch up on.*
>
> *She gives them instruction on page 2 to draw a line from the letter to the first sound of the name of the picture. They will do this page at their seats. The timer bell by the teacher rings. Before they leave the circle she asks them several questions. "What do you do if you have a question?" One says, "Ask that lady." The teacher says, "Her name is Aide #2." She passes the folders out to the group and asks them what they do when they are finished. They say they can read a book. The teacher's voice level rises as the group is going back to their places and she tells them, "Tigers, put the workbook in your folder when you are finished."*

Standards were set at the beginning of the year. Teacher C stressed respect and kindness toward one another from the very beginning, with the understanding that the more the students respect each other, the more they would be able to do fun and interesting things. A poster in the room was referred to throughout the year to stress the room standards. This poster is entitled "Our Civil Rights," and reads:

> I have a right to be happy and to be treated with compassion in this room: This means that no one will laugh at me or hurt my feelings. I have a right to be myself in this room: This means

> that no one will treat me unfairly because I am Black or White, fat or thin, tall or short, boy or girl. I have a right to be safe in this room: This means that no one will hit me, push me, pinch me, or hurt me. I have a right to hear and to be heard in this room: This means that no one will yell, scream, shout, or make loud noises.

Besides encouraging kindness and respect from everyone, Teacher C also had general rules to help keep problems from occurring. Some of these included: (1) No pencil sharpening except at the beginning or end of school; (2) no use of the sink in the room unless a drink of water is necessary, and then only one child at a time is allowed and only when the teacher is not talking; and (3) only one person allowed in the restroom at a time, after asking permission from an adult to leave the classroom.

Another important technique that Teacher C used to prevent problems was to remind and pre-counsel students about their behavior. This showed the students that she was concerned about their behavior and that she was trying to help them. Part of this counseling was to ask the students privately how they could help Teacher C that day and then to remind them of things she wanted them to work on. Then during the day only short reminders would have to be used if the student forgot the classroom standards. Stressing how important it was to be a good citizen in the classroom was also part of the counseling of the students. An example was cited by the observer during the third observation at the end of the first reading group.

> *The teacher goes on explaining about what they will do when they are finished with their work, and she passes their folders out for them to take to their seats. As Michael leaves, she puts her arms around him and talks to him about being a good citizen. She tells him he has on a pretty shirt. She asks him, "What is good?" Michael says, "Don't talk to nobody."*

Teacher C's reading period began immediately after the classroom logistics and the sharing period were completed. The period commenced with each student reading silently in a book of his or her choice. While the class was reading independently, Teacher C passed out seat work assignments to two groups of students so they could immediately begin their seat work.

After this was completed by Teacher C, she called the first group to the reading circle. At this point, one group worked with the teacher, one group worked at their seats, one group worked with the aide, while another worked at the activity table. The class was divided into these small groups according to reading ability and rotated every 20 minutes so each had a time at each activity. One small group consisting of two students worked independently at their seats for most of the period on tasks that the teacher had assigned to them.

Teacher C did a variety of activities during her reading instruction of each small group: vocabulary review, reading aloud, comprehension activities, workbook activities, and various learning games. The seat work was passed out at the end of each 20-minute period to each member of the group. The students were then dismissed to go back to their seats to complete their assignments. As the students were dismissed, a timer, set for 20 minutes, rang so that the rest of the class knew when it was time to move to the next activity.

As the students completed their work, they placed it in their folders and placed them in a designated place in the room. The aide and teacher corrected the work after school and returned it to the students to correct the next day. Each day's work was evaluated on a small calendar within the folder. A small colorful sticker was placed in the appropriate day if the work was completed satisfactorily and a small check was marked for unsatisfactory work.

The table designated as the "activity table" was generally set up in the form of a listening post so that students could read along in a book while listening with headphones to the words on a tape. The table was also set up with a Science Research Associates (SRA) kit so that some students could be assigned to work on comprehension.

Aides/Support Personnel

The full-time aide (Aide #1) also worked with each group doing various activities including reviewing vocabulary, playing learning games, completing various worksheets, and correcting work. The aide's work area was near enough to the activity table so that she could move quickly to that area if there were any problems.

Aide #1 had been working in that role at School H for three years. Prior to that, she had been a dedicated parent volunteer at the same school. This aide, Teacher C felt, was a definite asset to the organization and management of the class. Aide #1 had similar educational philosophies to Teacher C and took a great deal of initiative in the classroom situation. She was respected by all students and disciplined them as necessary in a kind but stern manner. Aide #1 had the same high expectations of the students as Teacher C and instructed the students accordingly.

Another aide, Aide #2, worked part time at School H and had just started working in Teacher C's classroom at the time of the second observation. She had never worked with children in a classroom situation before and was uncomfortable at the beginning. Teacher C assigned her to take care of individual questions while the students were completing their seat work. Near the end of the observations, Aide #2 began working with a small group of students to help them in reinforcing their reading skills.

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT - TEACHER Y

The Community

School K is located in a community which includes a residential area of small and generally well-kept homes. Nearby is government subsidized housing, consisting of two large apartment complexes which are generally well maintained. By contrast, a commercial area within walking distance of the school lends little to the appearance of the neighborhood and also contributes to certain problems. The commercial area includes fast-food businesses, a grocery store, a liquor store, and some vacant store buildings. Broken glass, litter, and weeds are evident around the vacant buildings.

The liquor store is one source of problems which are sometimes carried over to the classrooms. The store is opened early each morning which enables School K pupils to stop in to buy candy on their way to school. Bringing candy to school tends to cause disruptions. This problem is illustrated by the following excerpt from the ethnographic notes:

> *Sandra reports from the listening post that Nick has candy. Nick and Sandra come to the reading table and the teacher has a discussion with them about that. As they go back to the listening post, Nick says, "Sandra got candy, too." The teacher says, "Put the candy in the trash, all of it!" She watches Sandra walk to the trash can. As Sandra comes by the aide's table, she says that is all the candy she has. There is a problem with noise again at the listening post and the aide goes to that area. The teacher says, "Do you have candy also?" and one of the boys says, "In my mouth." The teacher says, "Spit it out." The aide sends several children away from the listening post to other areas in the room.*

Teacher Y, who eventually established a no-candy rule, reported one incident of students extorting money from a classmate to buy candy.

A major freeway is near School K and the residential areas served by the school are divided by a busy street. To walk to and from the school, many students must cross this street at a dangerous intersection without a traffic signal or school traffic patrol.

Some students from an apartment complex enter the school grounds through a gate on the northwest side of the school and congregate in an area where there is no supervision in the mornings. Occasionally, when fights and other conflicts would occur, they often would carry over to the school day and the classroom.

The school community also includes an attractive YMCA building and a minority-owned bank.

The School

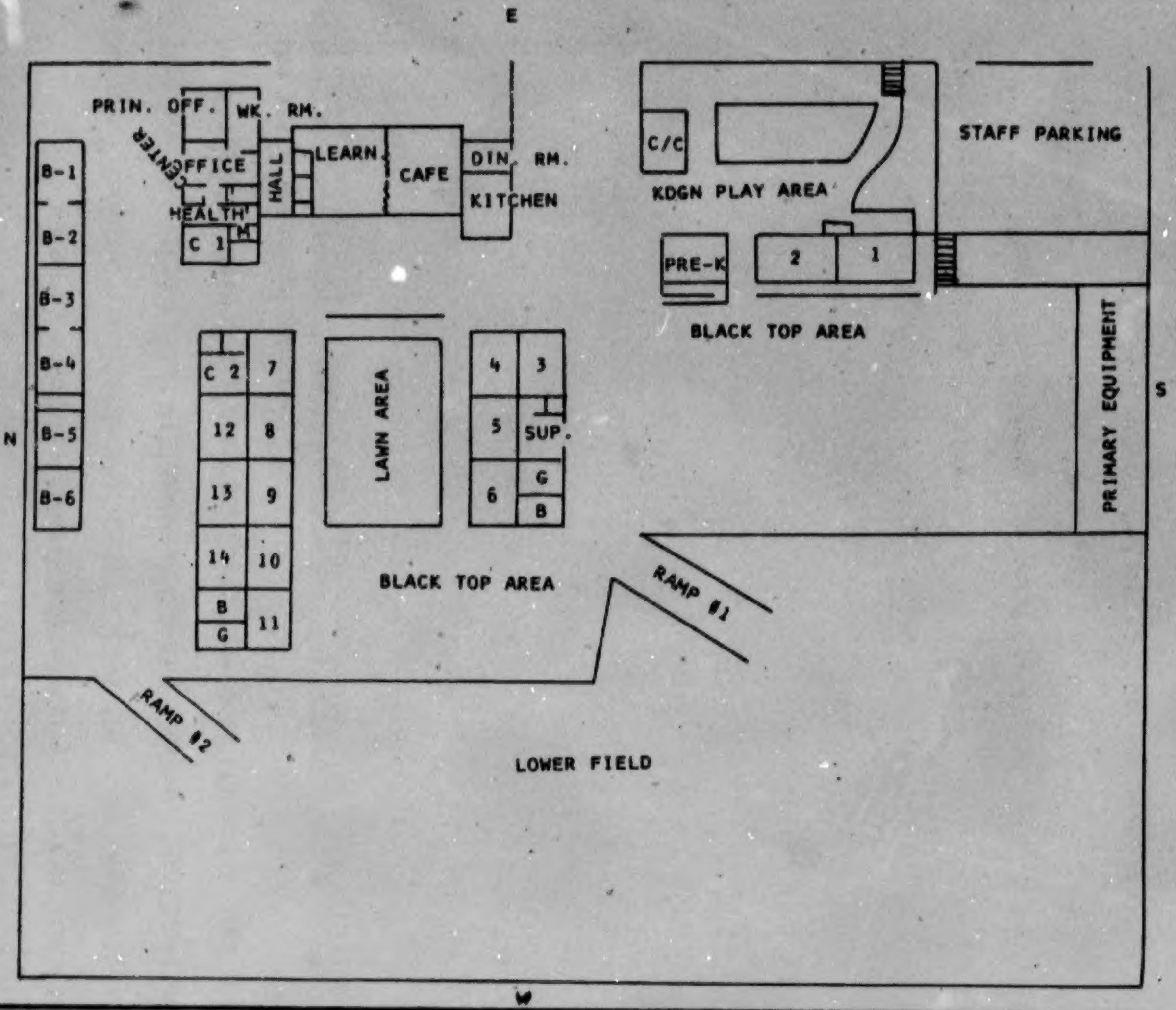
School K is an older, single-store facility featuring light brown stucco buildings. It is a rather stark appearing campus, with a minimal amount of trees, shrubs, and lawn (see Figure 3).

The enrollment at School K has been on the decline for nearly a decade. This was reflected in 1977-78 mobility figures. School K had a fall enrollment of 420. During the rest of the school year, 57 additional students enrolled in the school, but 79 transferred out. Thus, of every seven students who attended School K during 1977-78, only five attended for the entire year.

Vandalism once was fairly high at School K. In recent years, however, it has declined, partly because of the lower enrollment and partly because of prevention measures such as wire screens over windows.

In addition to the kindergarten through grade six program, the School K site also houses a preschool program and a children's center.

Of the 420 students enrolled in the fall of 1977, 87.1 percent were


E
PRIN. OFF.
WK. RM.
CENTER
OFFICE
HEALTH
C 1
HALL
LEARN.
CAFE
DIN. RM.
KITCHEN
C/C
KDGN PLAY AREA
STAFF PARKING
PRE-K
2
1
BLACK TOP AREA
B-1
B-2
B-3
B-4
B-5
B-6
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12
8
13
9
14
10
B
G
11
LAWN AREA
4
3
5
SUP.
6
G
B
PRIMARY EQUIPMENT
S
BLACK TOP AREA
RAMP #1
RAMP #2
LOWER FIELD
W

DIAGRAM OF SCHOOL K

Black, 6.3 percent Asian, 4.2 percent Hispanic, and 2.3 percent White. More than 350 of the students were eligible for free or reduced price lunches, which indicates relatively low family income levels in the community.

The numerous specially funded supplementary programs which serve School K include: the federally funded ESEA Title I and Project Follow Through, the state funded Miller-Unruh Reading Program, the Educationally Disadvantaged Youth (EDY) program, Early Childhood Education (ECE), and the state preschool program.

The staff of School K includes a principal, 14 classroom teachers (12 female, two male); two project resource teachers, one in charge of the math lab and one in charge of multicultural education; a reading specialist teacher; a special education teacher for learning disabilities; and 23 aides. Of the 19 certificated employees, 11 were White, including the principal, and eight were Black.

The establishment of two teacher lounges, one for smokers and the other for nonsmokers, prevented potential friction among teachers. However, the separate lounges also reduced the amount of contact teachers had with one another for sharing ideas and information. Such contact was further reduced because the lunch periods for upper elementary classes and primary classes were scheduled at different times.

The biggest issue among the teaching staff during 1977-78 was the DPT (Diagnostic Prescriptive Teaching) Program. Most of the teachers felt that the record keeping required for the DPT program took too much time away from classroom preparation. It was finally agreed that DPT would be dropped the following year, 1978-79.

The principal was new to School K and to the complexity of a budget based on a variety of funding sources. However, he proved to be an effective leader and to be supportive of the staff.

Teacher Y's Classroom

Teacher Y's classroom was arranged in a functional manner, featuring five working areas for reading: a grouping of tables for small group reading instruction with the teacher; a grouping of tables for DPT and phonics work with the classroom aide; an activity table; a silent reading table; and a listening post (see Figure 4). The room was arranged to make it easy for small groups of students to rotate about every 20 minutes from one work area to another. The room also included a large rug for children to sit on during games and other activities, a science table, a math table, a volunteer work table, and the teacher's desk.

The room included four main bulletin boards: one for art displays; one for vocabulary and other games, and for displaying good work; one a calendar board; and the fourth providing multicultural and social studies information.

The room had windows on one side only and was not extremely well lighted. It seemed particularly dark during the first three months because windows had been boarded up due to glass breakage.

CHARACTERISTICS OF PARTICIPANTS

The Students

Teacher Y's second grade class included 23 boys and eight girls at the beginning of the school year, but had changed to 18 boys and 10 girls by January. Three of the students were of Samoan descent, while the rest were Black. None was identified as limited or non-English speaking.

FIGURE 4

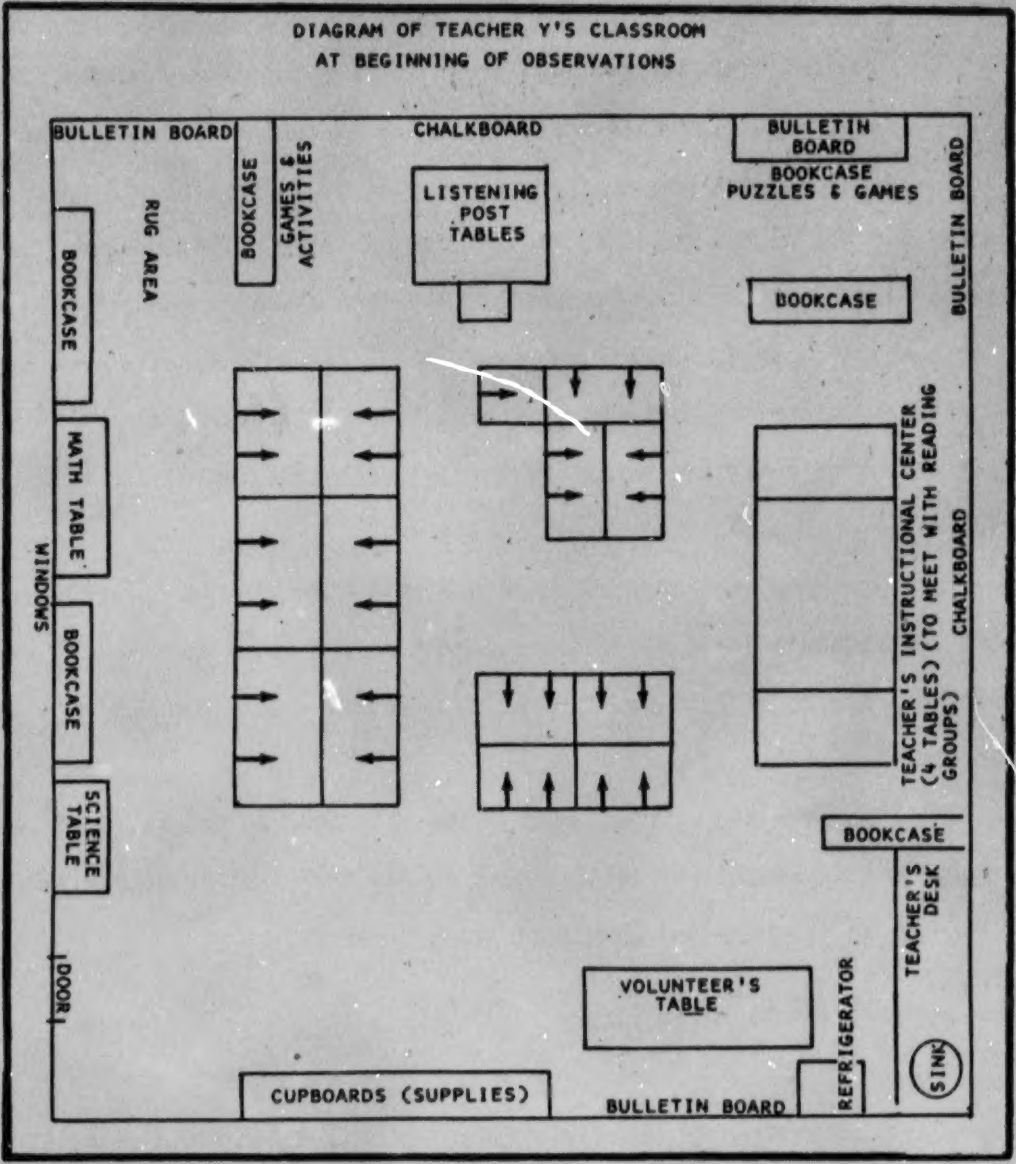


DIAGRAM OF TEACHER Y'S CLASSROOM
AT BEGINNING OF OBSERVATIONS

BULLETIN BOARD
CHALKBOARD
BULLETIN BOARD
BOOKCASE
PUZZLES & GAMES
BULLETIN BOARD
BOOKCASE
GAMES & ACTIVITIES
LISTENING POST TABLES
RUG AREA
BOOKCASE
BOOKCASE
MATH TABLE
WINDOWS
BOOKCASE
SCIENCE TABLE
DOOR
TEACHER'S INSTRUCTIONAL CENTER (4 TABLES) (TO MEET WITH READING GROUPS)
CHALKBOARD
BOOKCASE
TEACHER'S DESK
VOLUNTEER'S TABLE
REFRIGERATOR
SINK
CUPBOARDS (SUPPLIES)
BULLETIN BOARD

Most of the students were eager to read and easy to motivate. More than half the students, however, were reading in pre-primers or not reading at all. Six or seven required alphabet work early in the year. Of the remainder of the students, three were in the second reader and four in the first at the beginning of the year. During the year, every student in Teacher Y's class visited the reading specialist teacher four days a week, for at least five weeks.

All but four of Teacher Y's students qualified for free or reduced-price lunches, indicating relatively low family income levels.

Four students in Teacher Y's class had attentiveness problems, which often would result in distracting other students. Dealing with these problems, of course, required extra time on the part of adults in the classroom.

Teacher Y felt she had good parent support of special class programs, parties, etc. But she found that she had the most difficulty making contact with parents of children needing the most help. This had been the case in her previous years of teaching as well. Six or seven parents assisted voluntarily in the classroom early in the school year, but this support became less frequent with the approach of the Christmas holidays. One of the most regular volunteers obtained a children's center job and thereafter could assist only occasionally.

Teacher Y

Teacher Y has been at School K since she began teaching in 1972. She is a graduate of UCLA and attended San Diego State University to obtain a teaching credential. She is attractive and has short hair, a medium build, and dresses casually.

Teacher Y considers herself to be structured but flexible in the classroom. She is generally soft spoken. She is serious and somewhat reserved, but displays a genuine concern for the children in her class.

> *She tells Tanya and Latesha, "I need your eyes over here. I want to see your smiling faces. I need all my good helpers today" . . .*
> *"I hear someone singing. It sounds very nice but now is not the time."*

Teacher Y ordinarily worked with groups of four to nine students at a time during daily reading periods. She relied heavily on her aide, with whom she had worked cohesively for five years. While Teacher Y was working with a small reading group, Aide #1 was assisting another group in phonics work, and the remaining groups were working independently. Aide #1 also took care of many distractions which occurred away from the teacher-conducted reading group.

> *Today, she (the aide) helped with the mechanical problem at the listening post area and helped settle down workers at the table near the windows in the rear of the room. The aide walks to the rear table and speaks to some students there who are making noise. Then the aide walks to the listening post. She helps Ralph and another boy who are still trying on earphones. The aide walks back to her table and takes Ralph with her. . . . It was observed that the "Blue" group, which numbers nine, was very active today, both at the listening post and with the reading group. At the listening post, it was resolved by the removal of students to the aide's table . . .*

Teacher Y sat at one of four tables grouped together for the reading instruction. From that location, she used mostly verbal commands in dealing with disturbances.

> *As the class is moving to their stations, about five students come by and ask the teacher something. One group moves to the listening post. The teacher says, "Let's sit down quietly." She calls the names of three boys at the listening post. She tells Maurice to "bring that over here," meaning the jar of crayons. She says, "Tanya, Tanya, sit down." The teacher tells Debbie to bring that jar of crayons over here.*

> *She counts "one, two, three," and her voice level rises. The teacher tells Debbie to get a chair and sit down quietly at the listening post. The teacher says, "We are waiting for the listening post."*

Her position at the table did not permit the use of physical contact in coping with disturbances. She was positioned so she could have visual contact with most of the students. Aide #1 generally could have visual contact with those students who were out of sight of Teacher Y.

Teacher Y used both positive and negative discipline; e.g., choosing games or toys as rewards, lining up first for recess, helping with the snacks, sitting on benches during recess for refusing to work or follow directions, and being included in or excluded from field trips. Students had to have a minimum number of checks or stars on the "Good Citizen" bulletin board to go on field trips.

Teacher Y felt that she probably appeared to the observers to be less friendly with her students than she actually was. She said she normally set a more serious mood in the mornings during the reading periods, while a more relaxed atmosphere prevailed in the afternoons during the social studies and art activities. The observations took place in the mornings. Teacher Y also felt that she "stiffened up" during the observations.

Teacher Y's strategies for preventing distractions were based in large part on her cohesive working relationship with Aide #1, which had evolved during the previous five years. Because of her confidence in Aide #1, Teacher Y relied on the aide to handle many distractions occurring outside of the reading group. Teacher Y did, however, handle some distractions at the listening post by verbal commands from her seat with the reading group.

> *Louis comes over from the listening post. He says, "Teacher, he ain't sharing the erasers." The teacher tells Debbie to share the erasers. The teacher asks Marty, who is at the listening post, if it is playing. Ralph says, "It's playing but I can't hear nothing." The teacher continues with the reading circle. Cindy reads orally and she asks questions about the page she has read. The teacher says, "All right, Karl, you are doing too much talking over there. Let's work quietly." She calls Charles' name. There is a loud voice from Louis at the listening post. The teacher says, "Louis, Louis, take off your earphones and go sit down at the table and put your head down." She tells Marty to go to the other end of the table. The teacher continues with the "yellow" group at the reading table.*

Aide #1 generally would take the initiative in handling distractions.

> *The teacher looks up. Now there is the noise of the cassette from the listening post. The aide moves from her table to the listening post area. The squeal is still coming from the cassette. The teacher is going over the alphabetical order cards and the children are putting them in pocket charts. Most students seem to be working. The aide has finished helping at the listening post. . . . There is noise from the listening post area. The teacher looks up. The aide has called Erwin from the listening post to come over by her. He objects that he wasn't talking and stands pouting in the corner. Then the aide directs him to sit down at the back table and put his head down.*

In addition, students knew to refer questions and requests to Aide #1 whenever they were not in the reading group with Teacher Y.

> *Sandra says Debbie is going to "get it" at recess and then they argue about this. Marty goes over to the aide and complains to the aide. She calls Marty, Sandra, and Debbie to her.*

However, students knew they could call on Teacher Y if they needed a higher authority in the event they felt an injustice had occurred. Each morning, Teacher Y would outline for the students what they would be doing for the rest of the school day.

Teacher Y felt she had a high tolerance for noise. The program to reduce noise consisted of frequent verbal reminders such as, "Work quietly," "Waiting for quiet and ready people," "Keep your voices inside of you," and

"Shh." During the year, however, some students complained that it was too noisy. The noise level had not been distracting for Teacher Y, but since it bothered some of the students, a program to keep it quieter was initiated. Most of the noise came from the unsupervised groups at the activity table and listening post.

Teacher Y's reading program, which has been described in part earlier, involved five reading groups of four to nine students each. The composition of each group was based on ability. The median group included nine students, while four youngsters were in the most advanced group. Each group met for about 20 minutes a day with Teacher Y. At that time, they received formal reading instruction which followed the reading manual. Groups would work at each of five activity centers or stations on a daily basis, rotating every 20 minutes during the reading period. At any given time, one group would be with Teacher Y, one with Aide #1 working on phonics and related activities, and three groups would be working independently at the activity table for language arts and art activities, the silent reading table, and the listening post.

Aides/Support Personnel

Aide #1, in the eyes of the students, was a second teacher in the classroom. As stated earlier, she had worked with Teacher Y for five years and the two had developed an effective working relationship.

> *The aide brings a note to the teacher. The teacher reads the note and looks at the aide and nods her head. Then she goes back to working with the reading group. . . . Ralph and Nick are kicking each other under the table, but the teacher cannot see this. The aide points it out to her and explains that Ralph and Nick are kicking each other. . . . Erwin is still disturbing (others in the room). The aide calls him but he doesn't want to go and doesn't move. The teacher says, "Get up, Erwin, and do as you are told." Her attention returns immediately to Joe, who is sitting beside her. Erwin reluctantly gets up and sits at the table behind the aide.*

Aide #1, who was employed six hours a day, assisted in all instructional areas. Her major role in the area of discipline and classroom control has been described earlier. Aide #1 lived in the community and knew many of the children's parents, which often proved advantageous in working with students.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

DISTRACTIONS

A review of the total number of distractions for the nine observations indicated that the majority of the distractions in both Teacher C's and Teacher Y's classes were caused by the students. A distraction, for the purpose of this study, was defined as any event which took the teacher off her instructional task. In Teacher C's class, 88 percent of the total distractions were created by the students (269 instances). Teacher Y's student-generated distractions totalled 91 percent of all those that occurred (246 instances). The rest of the distractions, categorized as school-generated, teacher-generated, or out-of-school generated, made up 12 percent of the total for Teacher C and 9 percent for Teacher Y. (See Appendix A for a description of the distraction classification system.)

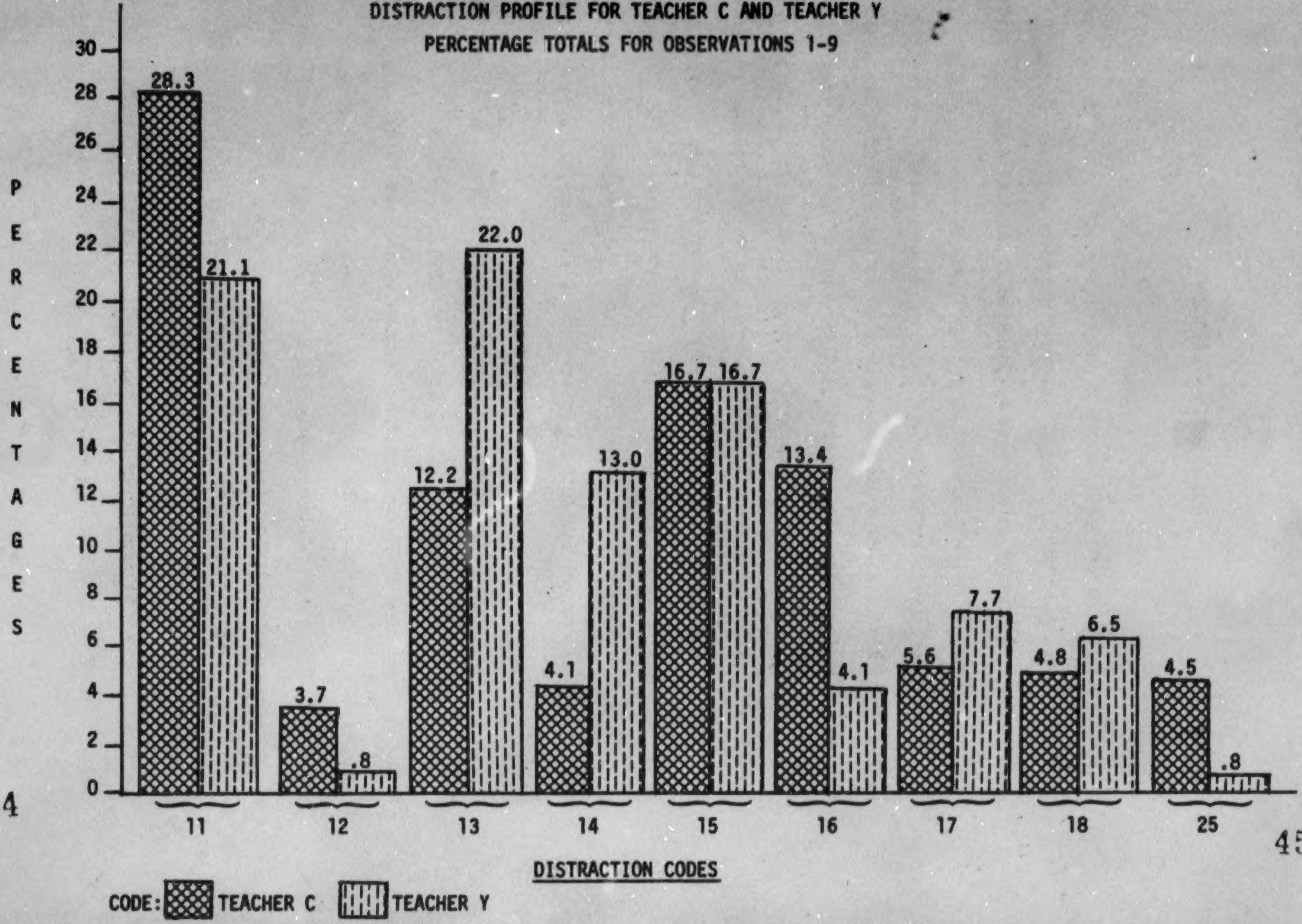
The following figure (Figure 5) provides the percentage totals for the student-generated distractions (Distractions #11-18) and for the teacher-generated distraction (Distraction #25).

The percentage totals for student-generated distractions showed that STUDENTS INTERRUPTING THE TEACHER (Distraction #11) was a common event in both classrooms and occurred almost as frequently in each situation. (Teacher C - 28 percent and Teacher Y - 21 percent.) This category included such events as students talking, students seeking approval, students asking miscellaneous questions, and students tattling.

While 25 percent of the distractions in this category were caused by general talking in Teacher C's class, more than 75 percent of these distractions originated outside her reading circle. The students interrupted Teacher C's instruction mainly to ask questions or seek clarification about

FIGURE 5

DISTRACTION PROFILE FOR TEACHER C AND TEACHER Y
PERCENTAGE TOTALS FOR OBSERVATIONS 1-9



their work. An example of this occurred in the third observation:

> *A girl comes up to the teacher and asks a word. She (the teacher) tells her what it is. She puts her hand on James' knee to remind him to pay attention. Grace is not at her place working. The teacher says, "Grace, you need to sit down." She calls Pedro's name twice and tells him he is supposed to be in the back with the aide. Mary is sharpening her pencil by the reading circle. The teacher says, "No, Mary." Mary says, "What's this?" showing the teacher her paper. She goes back to her seat and returns immediately asking another question. The group continues with their flashcard work. Mary asks another question about the picture. The teacher tells her, "It is treasure." Mary returns and asks another question. The teacher tells her it is a trailer or tractor. Mary comes and asks a third question. The teacher says, "Then don't circle them, go on to the next one. Sit down." Aide #2 comes by the circle and sharpens her pencil at the pencil sharpener. Mary asks, "What's this?" The teacher says, "A stool." The group at the circle is having trouble using the vocabulary words in sentences. Mary comes back again and asks, "What's this?" The teacher answers, "Stairs," and says, "Mary, you have a hand. Use it."*

In Teacher Y's class, only one-fifth of the interruptions were caused by questions from outside the reading circle. In this same class, over half the distractions that interrupted the teacher were due to questions or problems with the listening post and general talking both in and out of the group. In one instance in the third observation in Teacher Y's class:

> *Patty, at the listening post, is complaining loudly about the boy who is turning the film strip. She says, "He don't know how to do nothing." The teacher says, "Patty, get up." Patty continues to talk. The teacher again says, "Get up, Patty." Patty stands up at the circle and takes off her earphones. The students at the listening post are discussing if Roger did it wrong or not. They have the strip out of the projector and are playing with it. The circle is reading orally.*

The analysis of Distraction #12 (STUDENT SEEKING CLARIFICATION OF TASK) showed that the location and percentages of these disruptions for both teachers were similar to those in the Distraction #11 category.

Distraction #13, DISRUPTIVE STUDENT-STUDENT INTERACTIONS, included student disagreements, student discussions that were not related to the instructional task, and student physical contact. Unlike all of the other teachers involved in the study, Teacher Y's profile showed a dominance of #13 distractions. Student interactions occurred 54 times or 22 percent of the total number of distractions in Teacher Y's class. In Teacher C's class, these same interruptions occurred 33 times or 12 percent of her total number of distractions (see Figure 5).

During the analysis of this category, it was found that in Teacher Y's class the student-student disruptions occurred almost half of the time in her reading circle compared to one-fourth of the time in Teacher C's class. A common example of this type of interaction as it occurred in Teacher Y's class follows:

> *Nick and Richard are talking to each other. She (Teacher Y) says to them, "Let's listen." They have finished with the sequence cards and the teacher says, "Would you stack your three cards." They seem to have trouble doing this and are talking to each other about the right way to do it. The teacher says, "Let's put those voices inside of us. Debbie, did you hear what I said?" Ralph is hitting Latesha with the card. The teacher says, "Let's quietly open your books."*

Talking or interactions that occurred outside the teachers' reading circles was another common occurrence in both classrooms. In Teacher Y's class, the student-student disruptions outside the reading circle took place, for the most part, at the listening post (about 14 instances) and at the silent reading table and while the students were completing their seat work. In Teacher C's class, most of the student interactions occurred while the students were working at their seats (at least 12 instances). One-third of these student disruptions in Teacher C's class took place during the silent reading period before the regular reading activities began. One such instance occurred at the beginning of the first observation in Teacher C's class.

> *Daniel is talking to Michael instead of being at his own desk. He goes to his desk. He stands there, but he is still talking to Michael. The teacher moves from the back of the room to a table near the front where there are students seated. She is passing out their folders and workbooks. Daniel walks over to Michael's desk. Michael is talking loudly. The teacher says sharply, "Michael." Michael is lying on his desk.*

Distraction #14, labelled as GENERAL STUDENT NOISE, occurred fairly infrequently in both classrooms. Noise was classified as a distraction in Teacher C's class 11 different times, which was 4 percent of her total profile. Most of these instances of noise took place during her silent reading period, with the others being scattered throughout the reading period. Noise was coded 32 separate times, or 13 percent of the total in Teacher Y's class. Almost half of these disruptions were general noise problems occurring throughout the reading period, but mainly while the separate groups were moving from one activity to another. The other instances took place at the circle, at the listening post, and while the students were working at their seats.

Distraction #15 included STUDENTS NOT CONCENTRATING ON CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES AND NOT ON TASK. Distractions were coded as #15's if students were not listening or following directions, if they did not have the necessary materials, or if they were involved in any type of foolishness that would take them off task. This was a common distraction in both Teacher C's and Y's classrooms, although the distractions again occurred in different portions of the reading period in each room. Distraction #15 was coded 16 percent of the total number of distractions in both rooms, which totalled 41 times in Teacher Y's class and 45 times in Teacher C's class.

In Teacher Y's reading period, most of the lack of concentration occurred at the listening post (17 instances or more than 33 percent of the total). The majority of the remaining examples of this type of distraction took place during the transition time when the groups moved from table to table (20 percent of the total instances), and in Teacher Y's reading circle (9 or 20 percent of the total instances). An example of students in Teacher Y's class not concentrating at the listening post follows:

> *The Blue group comes to the reading table. There are eight students in this group. There is a group going to the listening post. The teacher says to them, "I am waiting for quiet and ready people. Leon, sit down." The teacher calls Susan's name twice. Susan looks up at the teacher and the teacher says, "Let's put that voice inside of you." The teacher calls, "Joe, Susan, if I have to speak to you once more you are going to have to get up and leave." The students at the listening post are still talking. The reading circle begins. The teacher says to Karl, who is at the listening post, "Put that voice inside of you." The teacher is asking the students at the circle questions about the story they read. The boy named Ralph arrives at the circle. He puts his chair in place and sits down. Louis is reading. The circle is quiet. The children at the listening post are also working quietly.*

In Teacher C's class, only two instances of STUDENTS NOT CONCENTRATING (Distraction #15) occurred at the listening post. The majority of these distractions occurred at Teacher C's reading cirle (more than 35 percent of the total instances), and while the students were at their seats completing their assignments (31 percent of the total instances). During the silent reading period, other instances (22 percent) were recorded when students were off task.

Examples of students not concentrating while at Teacher C's reading circle are included in this excerpt from the sixth observation:

> *Teacher has a stack of test booklets on her lap. She turns each booklet to the correct page and puts the child's name on it. Then she hands them to the students. She gives them*

> *some directions as they receive their booklets. Then she tells them to just set them on their laps. "All we are going to do is put X's on the pictures. We will do the first one together and I will help you." She says, "Michael, turn around and look at the pictures. The teacher reads the directions and the examples of unfinished sentences. They are to put X's on the correct possibilities. She calls a tutor who has entered the room to come to her and asks her to work with Elaine today. Elaine leaves the circle with the tutor. They begin the test. She tells them what the pictures are and then reads the sentence for them to complete. She says, "Turn around and stay that way," to David. The teacher looks up at the class and says, "Manuel, you are being too loud." The test goes at the circle. The teacher says, "Flip your book over so you see all the letters," and they do the example together on the next page. David is turned around giggling. The teacher says, "David, do you know why you turned around that way? So you won't turn around." Michael says to the teacher, "How come you're not doing it?" The teacher says, "Because I don't need to do it, I have to read you these." A girl comes to the circle and asks permission to go to the bathroom. The teacher nods. The teacher says, "Frank, turn around." To Michael, who is tilted back in his chair, the teacher says, "Keep the chair down." David is turned around giggling and looking at Frank. The teacher says to turn their books to page four, they will see some more letters and they will do the work on this page. She says, "Very good, good listeners."*

When a student's physical position or location became a disruption, it was coded as a Distraction #16. This category included students wandering around the room, students wiggling, and students not sitting in their seats properly. In Teacher C's class, this distraction was coded 13 percent of the time. In Teacher Y's class, this same distraction was coded only 4 percent of the time, most of them occurring in her reading circle.

During Teacher C's reading period, one-third of the total physical location distractions occurred in her reading circle. Another third occurred outside the circle, with the remaining third taking place both during the silent reading time and during the transition time. Examples of these distractions are included in the following passage from the second observation:

> *The teacher says, "You should be getting ready to read up front with your pencils, please." The teacher moves to the reading circle and is standing there. The Tiger group comes to the circle. There are six in this group. She (the teacher) says, "Frank, will you bring a chair to the circle, please?" The teacher sits down in her chair at the circle. She says, "Michael, you bring your chair, too." Michael stands by the teacher and asks her a question. He wanders over to the book corner. The teacher says, "Michael, come on, bring your chair and your pencil." Michael drags his chair across the floor. He places it by the teacher instead of in the circle with the children. The teacher points to where his chair should be and he moves it there. The group is working on flashcards. She tells them that they will have a special paper. Miachel gets up from his chair and goes to the chalkboard ledge to try to find the special paper. She motions to him to sit back down. When it's Pedro's turn to read, he has trouble with the word. She says, "We'll have to help Pedro. He's new." A girl enters the room from outside and asks the teacher a question. The teacher says she can't hear her. The girl moves to the circle and says, "Frieda can't come because she has a headache." The teacher says okay. Nancy is wandering around the room, not doing her work. The teacher says, "Nancy, will you sit down, please?" She helps Michael try to sound out the word "Dan." He is having trouble with it. She finally asks Elaine what the word is and Elaine says, "Dan." She says, "Michael, look at it now." Michael is having trouble paying attention.*

Because these student-generated distractions made up over 88 percent of the total for both teachers, the remaining distractions were minimal. These included outside noises or activities due to students or school personnel, visitors, school-management related activities such as the attendance folder or assemblies, student movement due to out-of-classroom activities, communication to the teacher, etc. A category for TEACHER-GENERATED DISTRACTIONS (Distraction #25) was also included in the study's classification system. Teacher C created 12 separate distractions, whereas Teacher Y created only two, both of which concerned collecting teaching materials. Teacher C's distractions, which were mostly preventative techniques, included getting forgotten teaching materials, talking to the tutor and aide, resetting her timer, rearranging furniture, and checking on students.

As seen from this analysis, the percentage totals for most of the distraction categories were similar for both teachers. In Teacher C's and Teacher Y's classrooms, the majority of the distractions were student-generated and fell into the major categories of student interrupting the teacher, student-student interactions, student not concentrating, student noise, and student's physical location. Many of these distractions, for both teachers, took place within their reading circles.

After more closely analyzing the above categories, the teachers found that although the kinds of distractions were similar, differences within the classifications were evident. Teacher Y's disruptions tended to be more student-student oriented, whereas Teacher C's interruptions were created more often by individual students. A large part of Teacher Y's distractions took place at the listening post area and during transition. Teacher C had very few of these types of interruptions, but had many more individual students distracting her while she was at her reading circle, both from within and from outside the circle. Many of these were generated by students who were completing their assignments at their seats and needed clarification of their work.

From their analyses, Teacher C and Teacher Y found that, on the average, 28 coded distractions occurred per each of the nine observations (each approximately one hour in length). Each of these distractions then were dealt with by the two teachers with techniques that they felt would eliminate the disruption as quickly and as easily as possible. Many of the techniques that Teacher C and Teacher Y used will be discussed in the following section.

COPING TECHNIQUES

When distractions occurred in Teacher C's and Teacher Y's classrooms, both teachers used a variety of techniques to remedy the situations so that the flow of their instruction could continue. For the purpose of this study, these strategies were designated as "coping techniques." The techniques, both verbal and nonverbal, were put into categories, which included direct commands, compliments, clarification of rules, use of voice to solicit behavior, use of body language, physical redirection of students' attention, calling attention to inappropriate behavior, ignoring, etc. (See Appendix B for a description of the coping technique classification system.) As with the distractions, the percentage totals for most of the coping technique categories were similar for the two teachers (see Figure 6). Very few categories showed marked differences.

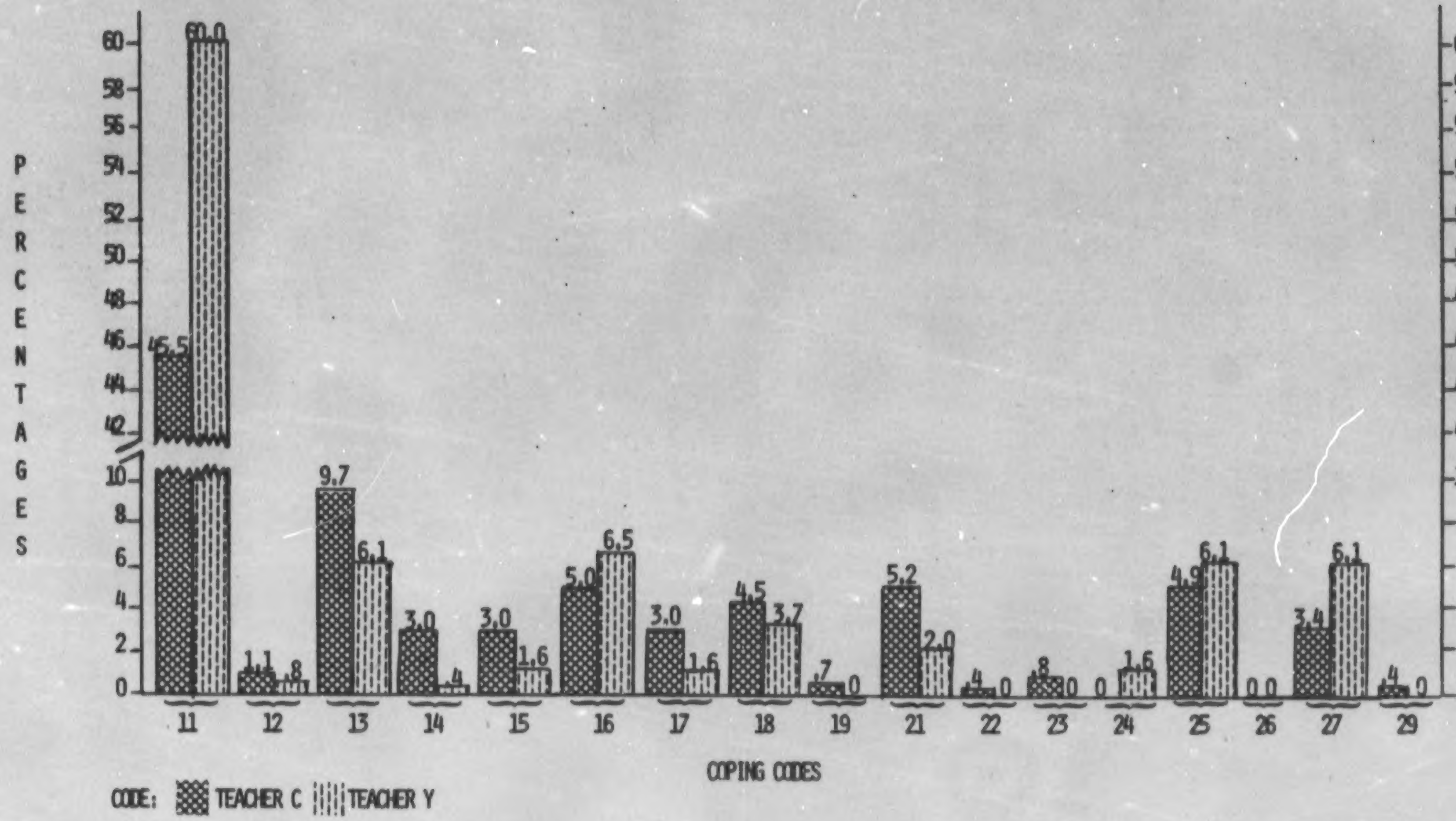
The majority of the distractions in both classrooms were dealt with by the verbal use of DIRECT COMMANDS OR INSTRUCTIONS (Coping Technique #11). This category included the teacher giving a student direct instructions, calling for the student's attention, calling on an inattentive student, or redirecting a student's attention by calling his or her name. DIRECT COMMANDS OR INSTRUCTIONS made up 60 percent of the total coping techniques used by Teacher Y. Teacher C's use of this same technique amounted to 45 percent of her total.

Examples of this coping technique, as used by Teacher C during the sixth observation, follow:

> *There are nine students working at the aide's table. There are five at the listening post. Daniel is wandering around the room sucking his finger. He looks for something by the listening post area. He stops by Carlos' desk and helps him with some sounds, then he blows in Carlos' ear. The teacher says, "Daniel, you are supposed to be over here," and points*

FIGURE 6

COPING TECHNIQUE PROFILE FOR TEACHER C AND TEACHER Y
PERCENTAGE TOTALS FOR OBSERVATIONS 1-9



> *to his desk. David calls, "Teacher C, Michael has taken something from the coat room." The teacher says, "Put it back," to Michael. David laughs. The teacher says, "Sit down, Pedro. Get busy. Sit down, Michael." The group at the circle is doing a test booklet. Daniel comes up to the circle and stands by the teacher. She doesn't look at him and he goes back, sucking his finger. He stands by his desk. At the listening post, Derek has taken off his earphones and the music is audible. The teacher says, "Derek, put it on." Daniel walks into the circle, up to the teacher and asks for an eraser. She hands him one. Daniel is standing by Michael's desk. The teacher says, "Daniel, sit down. Don't bother him." She calls Larry's name and frowns at him. He sits down. There is a problem between David, Michael, and Larry, which the aide handles and the teacher looks at them. The work in the test booklets goes on. She (the teacher) notices that Frank is sitting closer to Larry's desk. She says, Frank, move over to your side. Don't bother Larry."*

Similar instances occurred in Teacher Y's class. The following example from the seventh observation illustrates how she used direct instructions to cope with distractions.

> *As the group comes to the circle, she says, "Close your books right now. Close your books. Close them." Sandra comes up to the teacher from the listening post area. She has a question about the record player. The teacher says, "Sit down, Ralph." A boy comes up to the teacher from the class and complains that someone has moved his chair. Ralph is trying to operate the record player at the listening post and it is not his turn. The teacher says, more loudly, "Ralph, if you put your hands on there once more you are going to leave." A voice from the listening post says, "Teacher Y, they made the record player go too fast." The teacher says, "Ralph" three times, "Get up and take your earphones off." Then she tells Sandra, "Just put it on and leave it alone." Erwin is sitting next to the teacher in a chair at the reading table. She says, "Erwin, I know you can sit in this chair." There are four students at the circle. They are working on opposites from a reading chart at the side of the circle. They take turns coming to the chart to find opposites of the words the teacher says. Some of the students answer out of turn. The teacher says, "Matthew, sit down." Matthew is trying to help Erwin when it is his turn. Matthew turns around and asks the observer what she is doing that for. Now it is her turn and the teacher calls her name. She is having trouble finding the word on the chart. The other students want to help her. The teacher says, "Erwin, Erwin" twice when he answers instead of Karl. There are six students at the listening post. They are listening quietly now.*

The coping technique of DIRECT COMMAND OR INSTRUCTION was used by Teacher C and Teacher Y to cope with distractions in lieu of other techniques because of its apparent effectiveness. Effectiveness was defined in terms of three dimensions: (1) The instructional time loss due to the distraction, (2) the degree the instructional activity flow was interrupted, and (3) the degree to which the distraction was eliminated after a coping technique had been used.

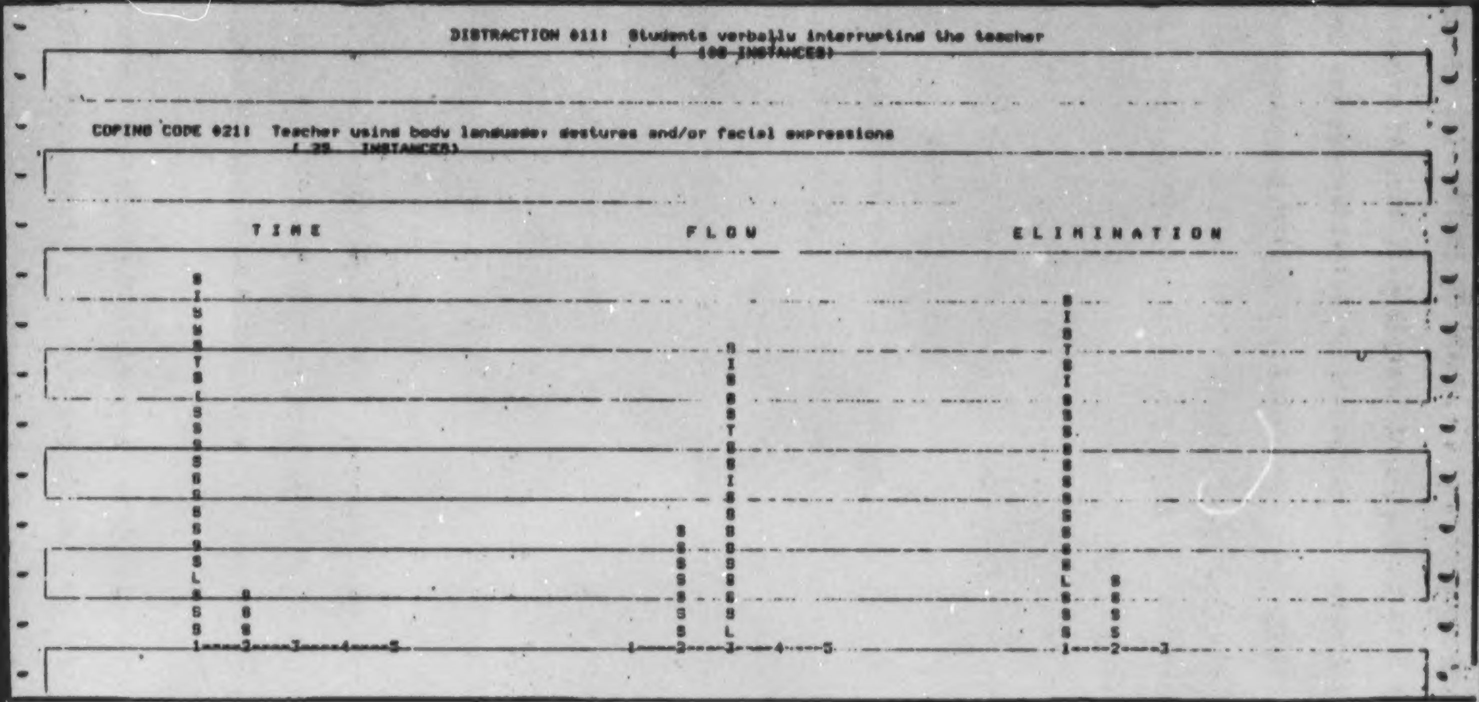
Figure 7 shows the three histograms (one for each of the above dimensions) for Distraction #11 (STUDENT INTERRUPTING THE TEACHER) in conjunction with Coping Technique #11 (DIRECT COMMAND). The data shown was collected in both Teacher C's and Teacher Y's classes during the last three observations. Each letter indicates one occurrence of the use of a command for the purpose of eliminating a student interrupting the teacher. The definitions for each rating that these instances were given are shown below the appropriate histogram.

Figure 7 illustrates that the time lost by use of the DIRECT COMMAND was minimal, usually taking less than ten seconds (Ratings 1 and 2). For both teachers, the "Flow" histogram shows that this technique usually restricted the disruption to the teacher (and not the students), or limited it to a minor distraction to the teacher and the students (Rating 3). A few of these instances received a Rating 4, which denoted that the instruction was disrupted but that the teacher was able to bring the group back to her intended task.

The "Elimination" histogram revealed that the direct command immediately eliminated (Rating 1) the distraction of a student interrupting the teacher most of the time, with a few instances of the distractions

FIGURE 7

SAMPLE OF COMPUTER PRINTOUT
OF "TIME", "FLOW" AND "ELIMINATION" HISTOGRAMS



DISTRACTION #11: Students verbally interrupting the teacher
(108 INSTANCES)

COPING CODE #21: Teacher using body language, gestures and/or facial expressions
(29 INSTANCES)

1 = LESS THAN 5 SECONDS
2 = 6 - 10 SECONDS
3 = 11 - 20 SECONDS
4 = 21 - 40 SECONDS
5 = MORE THAN 40 SECONDS

1 = NO APPARENT BREAK IN THE INSTRUCTIONAL FLOW (DISTRACTION IGNORED)
2 = DISTRACTION MAINLY TO TEACHER; DOESN'T BOTHER STUDENTS
3 = MINOR DISTRACTION TO BOTH TEACHER AND MOST STUDENTS IN THE GROUP
4 = INSTRUCTION DISRUPTED, BUT TEACHER BRINGS THE GROUP BACK
5 = INSTRUCTION COMPLETELY DISRUPTED; VERY DIFFICULT OR NOT POSSIBLE TO BRING THE GROUP BACK TO TASK

1 = APPARENT ELIMINATION OF DISTRACTION
2 = DISTRACTION CONTINUES AT A REDUCED (ACCEPTABLE) LEVEL
3 = DISTRACTION CONTINUES AND TEACHER USES ANOTHER TECHNIQUE

CODE:
I=INDIVIDUALIZED INSTRUCTION
S=SMALL GROUP
L=LARGE GROUP
T=TRANSITIONAL TIME

persisting (Rating 2) after the technique was used. An analysis of all the cases in which a direct command was utilized revealed this same pattern.

After examining the general use of this coping technique by each teacher, some differences appeared. Teacher C's time histogram showed that 90 percent of the time that she used a command, the problem was taken care of in less than ten seconds (Rating 1 and 2) compared with 80 percent for Teacher Y. Eighty percent of the disruptions paired with this direct instruction technique in Teacher C's class and 66 percent in Teacher Y's class were either coded as distractions just to the teacher (Rating 2) or as minor interruptions to both the teacher and the students in her group (Rating 3). The remaining instances for both teachers fell into the Rating 4 category under flow. Both teachers' histograms showed that the distractions were eliminated immediately most of the time (60 percent for Teacher Y; 85 percent for Teacher C). The elimination histogram also revealed that Teacher Y had a higher percentage (40 percent) than Teacher C (15 percent) of distractions that continued at a reduced level after the coping technique had been used (Rating 2). The two teachers had very few instances coded by the observers in which a direct command did not work so that they had to use another technique to remedy the situation.

Another technique used by both teachers to take care of distractions was that of CLARIFYING OR REMINDING THE STUDENTS OF RULES which already existed in the classroom (Coping Technique #13). This technique included questioning, directing, and threatening the students to remind them about rules that had been made previously in the school year. Included in the ethnographic notes below are techniques used by Teacher C to clarify or remind the students of rules:

> *Michael has left the circle and gone to the drinking fountain. He returns and says, "Get out of my seat." The teacher says to him, "Do you know our rule about going to the drinking fountain?" David laughs and the teacher asks David to tell Michael the rule. David says, "When you talk, don't go," and the teacher asks him to repeat this to Michael again.*
>
> *The teacher looks up and says, "Larry, sit down. Michael, get your book so he can get up there, please. There is a rule that only one may be at the book corner at a time." Carlos starts for the book corner and the teacher says, "Carlos, do you see somebody up there?"*
>
> *The bell rings. The direction at the reading circle continues. The rest of the class moves to their new stations. Daniel has stood up when it isn't time. She says, "Will you sit down?" to him. She passes worksheets and tells them if they have work to finish in their workbooks. They leave the circle as they receive their work. The next group is already arriving. The rule is that they not come to the circle until the previous one is gone. She says, "Mary, it is not time for you to come up yet," and tells Samuel the same thing. "Wait until you see everyone gone." Daniel and Shanda have left the circle without their directions. She says, "Daniel and Shanda, come back." Samuel and Mary are still standing by the circle. She says, "Go to your seats until I call you."*

Coping Technique #13 was used by Teacher C almost 10 percent of her total coping instances. Most of the time, reminding was used in response to the distractions, STUDENTS INTERACTING WITH OTHER STUDENTS (Distraction #13), and STUDENTS NOT CONCENTRATING ON THEIR TASKS (Distraction #15).

Teacher Y was coded as using the reminding technique 6 percent of the total coping techniques used. As with Teacher C, most of these reminding strategies were utilized when Teacher Y coped with students who were not concentrating. The following are examples of Teacher Y clarifying or reminding the students of rules:

> *Now the class is ready to rotate. She rings the chime one time and they begin to move. Erwin and Joe are racing to the reading circle and bump into each other trying to get past the chart. Erwin says, "Joe's running." The teacher directs both of them to go back and to stand behind the chairs where they were. They do this and then she directs them to walk*

> *over to the reading table. There are complaints from the listening post area about the speed. The teacher says, "Marty, let's have your seat." She tells the group that is coming to the reading table, "You people have been told that when you are over there, everything is set. Don't change the speed or the volume. Keep your hands off of it."*
>
> *Margaret is sitting at her seat but not doing anything. The teacher says, "Margaret, have you read the story for today? Let's get it read." Margaret begins to read her story.*
>
> *The listening post group is still not under way. The teacher says, "Susan, Susan, let's keep your voice inside of you." Susan asks a question about going to the math lab and the teacher says, "You know you go every day but Monday." To Cindy she says, "Wait just a minute. Wait just a minute." To Leon and Alicia she says, "Your voices are inside of you. Leon, Alicia, I think you would like to give up some of your recess time today." Then she says to the group, "All right, we are going to turn to page 106. See how quietly you can find that page." Susan is chattering and the teacher says, "Susan, where is that voice supposed to be?" Susan says, "Inside of me." The teacher says, "We are going to have to do something at recess to help you remember."*

REMINDING STUDENTS OF RULES (Coping Technique #13) was not used by either teacher as often as the DIRECT COMMAND (Coping Technique #11) but when it was used, it immediately eliminated the distraction over 88 percent of the time for Teacher C and over 50 percent of the time for Teacher Y. However, when this technique was paired with a distraction, it did interrupt the teacher and students (Rating 3) or disrupted the instruction so that the group needed to be brought back to task (Rating 4) about 73 percent of the time for both teachers. While reminding students of the rules somewhat broke the instructional flow, it took very little time. This finding is illustrated by the data which indicate that 73 percent of the time Teacher Y reminded students and 90 percent of the time Teacher C reminded them, the technique took less than ten seconds to eliminate the distraction.

Other techniques that took very little time were those that were nonverbal in nature, some of which were placed in the following categories:

Coping Technique #21, TEACHER USE OF FACIAL REACTIONS, GESTURES, EYE CONTACT, AND SIGNALS; Coping Technique #22, TEACHER MOVING AROUND THE ROOM TO COPE WITH DISTRACTIONS; Coping Technique #23, TEACHER PHYSICALLY REDIRECTING STUDENTS' ATTENTION by touching them or removing objects that were taking their attention away from the task at hand; and Coping Technique #24, TEACHER CALLING ATTENTION TO INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIOR by writing student names on the board, turning the lights off, ringing bells, pausing or waiting, or using signs.

Teacher C's use of the above techniques, although no instances were recorded for Coping Technique #24, made up 6 percent of all coping strategies she employed. Examples of some of the body language techniques she used follow:

> *Elaine asks about a pencil and the teacher points to the pencil can.*
>
> *Sanda says, "Teacher C, Ann is messing with the record player." Teacher C shakes her head at Ann.*
>
> *A girl comes to the circle and asks the teacher a question about an eraser. The teacher nods. The girl moves to the back of the room and gets an eraser from the drawer.*
>
> *An adult enters the room with some papers but does not know where to put them. The teacher points to where they should go.*
>
> *She puts her hand on Eric's knee when he wiggles too much. Daniel and Michael both have their hands raised for Aide #2 to help them. The teacher says, "Mary" again. Mary is bouncing a book on her knee. She stops. The teacher says, "Mary" again and frowns at her. Mary is now making noise with her foot. She stops this now.*

Teacher Y employed some of these same techniques, but was not recorded as using any that fell into the categories of Coping Techniques #22 or #23. She used body language as a way to cope with interruptions 4 percent of all the techniques utilized. Examples of this use are as follows:

The teacher says, "Just a minute" to Leon and puts her finger to her lips as Leon answers out of turn.

There is noise from the class, mostly from the listening post area. The teacher rings the chime seven times and the class settles down a little.

Then the teacher tells them that she is going to read a story from the manual and they will pick out the *et* *words. Alicia is twirling her book on the top of the table. The teacher points her finger at her and she stops.*

Juan comes and stands at the circle and waits to get the teacher's attention. When she looks up at him he asks if he can use the bathroom. The teacher nods.

Alicia is playing with a word card that belongs to the teacher. The teacher moves it away. Alicia picks up a stapler and begins to play with it. The teacher moves that away also.

These techniques, as used by both teachers, took very little time (over 85 percent of the time it was utilized, it took less than five seconds), was usually a disruption just to the teacher (over 75 percent of the time it received a Rating 1 or 2 for flow), and was eliminated immediately in all but two instances. These two instances occurred when Teacher Y used a tone bell as a signal to remind her students that they were being too noisy.

Another nonverbal technique that both teachers used was that of IGNORING THE DISTRACTION (Coping Technique #25). This technique was coded only after the teacher overtly exhibited awareness of the existence of the distraction but then chose not to do anything about it. Teacher Y used this technique 6 percent of her total and Teacher C used it close to 5 percent of all the techniques she utilized. By looking at the specific instances when this strategy was used, it was found that all but five of the distractions that were ignored occurred outside of the teacher's immediate reading circle. The analysis of this technique revealed that it took very little time (all but two instances took less than five seconds), seldom broke the flow of instruction (all but three instances received a Rating 1 or 2), and eliminated the distraction immediately more than 75 percent of the time it was used.

Another nonverbal technique that immediately eliminated interruptions was the TEACHER PHYSICALLY RESOLVING THE DISTRACTION (Coping Technique #27). Both teachers used this technique, which included getting materials or "fixing" a problem that was disruptive to the instruction. Teacher Y employed this strategy 6 percent (15 instances) of her total use of coping techniques compared with Teacher C, who physically resolved distractions over 3 percent of her total (10 instances).

Teacher Y mainly used this technique to resolve listening post problems, to respond to notes, to gather forgotten materials, and to physically move students. Examples of Teacher Y's use of resolving disruptions follow:

> *The film strip projector at the listening post makes a grind-noise. The group looks puzzled. The teacher says, "Turn it off." She stands up and walks to the listening post to see what the trouble is. She says, "Who took the screw out?" Someone has removed the screw on the top of the film strip projector. She replaces the screw and reminds them not to touch any parts of the machine. She comes back to the reading table. The work continues.*
>
> *The teacher is looking on the chalkboard ledge for the manual. She walks to the aide's table and gets her manual from the aide.*

Teacher C utilized this same technique to collect forgotten materials, to respond to communications from outside the classroom, and to move students when necessary. Examples of her use of these strategies follow:

> *The teacher says, "Open your books. Oh, sorry!" She has forgotten that she put them on the ledge. She takes them and passes them out to the students.*

> *Two monitors enter the room, walk up to the circle, and hand the teacher a clipboard with a message. The teacher checks it and hands it back.*
>
> *The teacher stands up and walks to the bookcase at the back of the room, gets her manual, and returns to the circle.*

When Teacher C or Y employed this strategy (Coping Technique #27), the distraction was immediately eliminated in all but one instance. Forty percent of the time the teachers physically resolved a disruption, it took longer than ten seconds and sometimes took as long as two minutes to eliminate the distraction. Because of the nature of the coping technique, in over 60 percent of the instances in which it was utilized, the flow of instruction was interrupted so that it affected both the teacher and the students. In eight of these instances (over 30 percent), the reading instruction was so seriously interrupted that the teachers were unable to bring the groups back to the task at hand.

In summary, the only coping technique that showed a major difference between Teacher C and Teacher Y was Coping Technique #11, DIRECT COMMAND OR INSTRUCTION. (The reader is redirected to Figure 6.) Both Teacher C and Teacher Y used the command strategy more than any other technique because of its brevity and apparent immediate elimination. As stated previously in this section, Teacher Y utilized this technique more frequently than Teacher C, a total of 60 percent of all the strategies she employed. Teacher C used DIRECT INSTRUCTIONS, Coping Technique #11, 45 percent of her total coping strategies.

Due to the 15 percent difference between Teacher C and Teacher Y in the use of the command, further analysis of their styles was done. Out of the 34 categories of coping strategies used in this study, Teacher C was coded as utilizing 26. Teacher Y was coded as utilizing 18 of the 34 categories. These figures indicate that Teacher C used a wider variety of coping techniques with a higher frequency than Teacher Y.

In the categories that Teachers C and Y used in common, the percentages were similar. When they reminded their students of rules (Coping Technique #13), it was found that it took very little time, broke the flow enough to receive Ratings 3 and 4 over 70 percent, but eliminated the disruption immediately the majority of the time.

The nonverbal techniques were found to be particulary effective for both teachers. The use of any type of gesture or signal (Coping Techniqes #21-24) to resolve a distraction showed little loss of time, revealed that the disruption was kept only to the teacher in all but a few instances, and exhibited immediate elimination in all but two instances. These same results were found when both teachers chose to ignore (Coping Technique #25) any of the distractions that occurred. When it was necessary for either Teacher C or Teacher Y to physically resolve a disruption herself, it appeared that more time was lost than when the above techniques were used. The flow of instruction was broken to the extent that the teacher and the pupils were taken off task more than 64 percent of the time (Ratings 3, 4, and 5), but the interruption was eliminated immediately in all but one instance.

The above analysis has shown the variety of strategies that both Teacher C and Teacher Y used to attempt to eliminate disruptions as efficiently as possible so that their instruction could continue. This analysis has also illustrated the effectiveness of various coping techniques. The following section will discuss the effectiveness of specific coping techniques when used for the purpose of eliminating specific distractions.

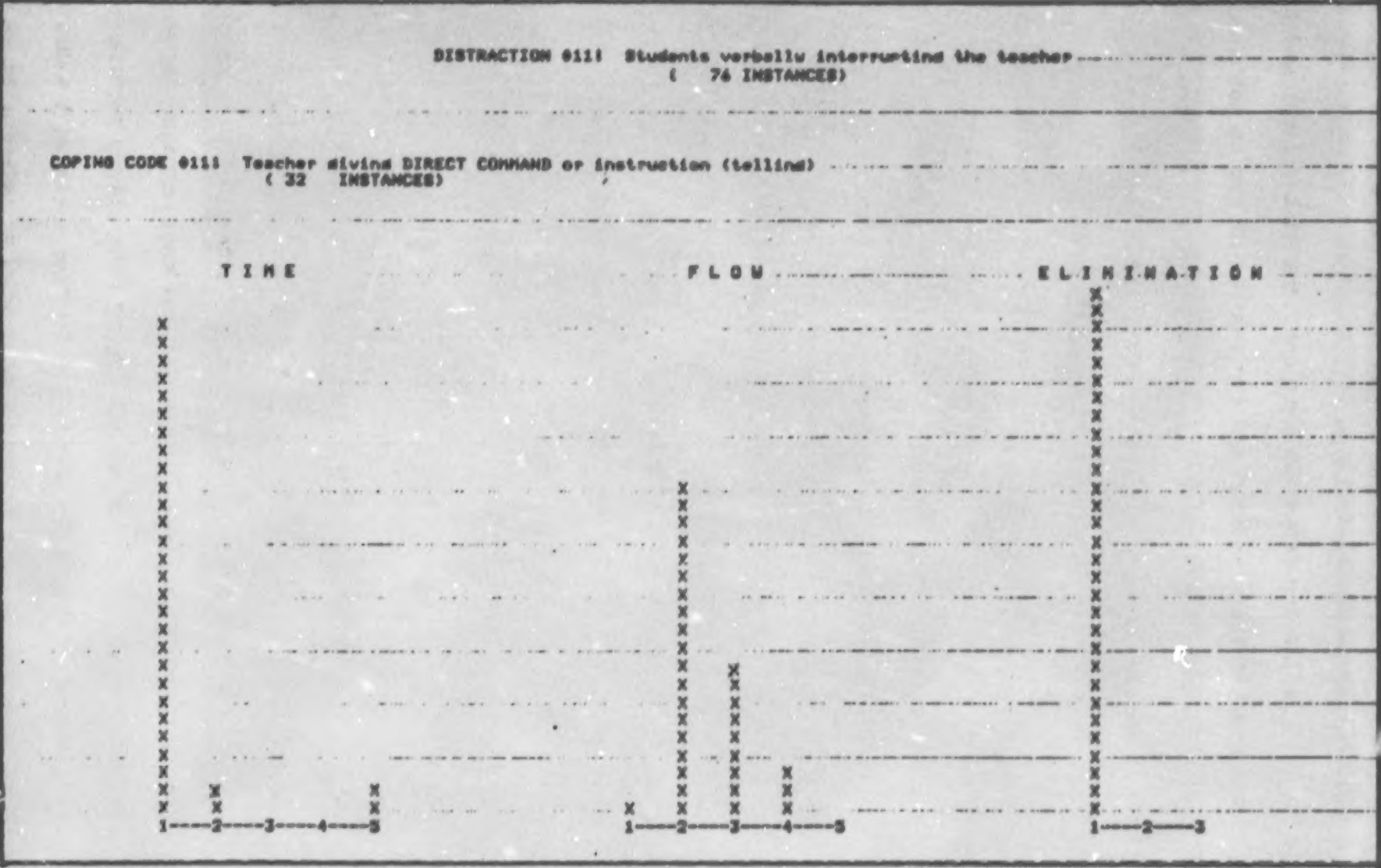
DISTRACTION-COPING LINKAGES

In the preceding two sections, the distractions which teachers encounter in the classroom and the variety of coping techniques that they use to attempt to eliminate these distractions have been discussed. In this section, a description of distraction-coping linkages that occurred in Teacher C's classroom will be presented. For the purpose of this study, the coupling of the use of a specific coping technique in response to a specific distraction will be referred to as a linkage. Certain linkages seemed to stand out because of frequency of occurrence or because of particular effectiveness or ineffectiveness due to the coping technique used, some of which will be mentioned here.

One linkage that occurred frequently in Teacher C's classroom was Coping Technique #11 (COMMAND OR DIRECT INSTRUCTIONS) used when a Distraction #11 (STUDENT INTERRUPTING THE TEACHER) occurred. Teacher C used the command technique almost 50 percent of the time she was interrupted by students. Figure 8 shows the effectiveness ratings for this linkage as it was used by Teacher C. It reveals that the time lost was minimal, that the majority of the time the disruption was mainly to the teacher or minimally to her group, and that the problem was eliminated immediately in all but one instance. (Since the effectiveness of Coping Technique #11 was discussed in the previous section, it will not be elaborated on further.)

Another manner in which Teacher C dealt with students interrupting her (Distraction #11) was to use various body language techniques (Coping Technique #21). Examples of her use of this coping technique were also illustrated in the Coping Technique Section. Figure 9 shows how effective this technique was for Teacher C when used in response to an interruption by a student.

FIGURE 8
HISTOGRAM DISPLAY FOR DISTRACTION #11 - COPING TECHNIQUE #11
LINKAGE FOR TEACHER C



DISTRACTION #11: Students verbally interrupting the teacher
(76 INSTANCES)

COPING CODE #11: Teacher giving DIRECT COMMAND or instruction (telling)
(32 INSTANCES)

FIGURE 9

HISTOGRAM DISPLAY FOR DISTRACTION #11 - COPING TECHNIQUE #21

LINKAGE FOR TEACHER C

```
                    DISTRACTION #11:  Students verbally interrupting the teacher
                                              (    76 INSTANCES)


COPING CODE #21:  Teacher using body language, gestures and/or facial expressions
                    ( 10   INSTANCES)


     T I M E                  F L O W               E L I M I N A T I O N

S                                                   S
S                                                   S
S                              S                    S
S                              S                    S
S                              S                    S
S                              S                    S
T                              S                    T
T                              T                    T
S                              S                    S
S                         T    S    S               S
1----2----3----4----5     1----2----3----4----5     1----2----3
```

Figure 9 illustrates that this linkage was particularly effective for Teacher C. The linkage never took longer than five seconds; only once did the linkage become a disruption to the students; and in every instance, the distraction was immediately eliminated. This information was gleaned from the data after the sixth observation at the data review sessions. Because the other teachers involved in the study found similar ratings for the BODY LANGUAGE TECHNIQUE (Coping Technique #21), Teacher C decided to attempt to increase her use of it. (See Intervention Section for details.) The data for the rest of the observations, with the increased use of body language techniques, showed that the same level of effectiveness continued.

Another distraction which occurred frequently in Teacher C's classroom was that of STUDENT-STUDENT INTERACTIONS (Distraction #13). Teacher C used a COMMAND OR DIRECT INSTRUCTIONS (Coping Technique #11) more than 50 percent of the time to deal with the student interactions that occurred in her classroom. An example of this linkage follows:

> *Michael comes up to the circle and asks a question; the teacher answers him. Michael is standing at Daniel's table, then he walks back to his table. Daniel is talking to him across the room and he walks over to Michael's table. Aide #1 is working at her table with eight students. There are five students at the listening post area. Frank asks a question and the teacher tells him to ask Aide #2. The teacher says, "Daniel, you have your own work to do." She tells Grace at the circle, "Very nice sentence. Great." Daniel and Michael are doing their worksheets together, talking across the room. Each is at his own table. The teacher says shush to Michael, whose voice has gotten quite loud saying the letters to Daniel. Michael comes up to the teacher and asks a question about the worksheet. She tells him that it is ending sounds, not beginning sounds. He stops at Daniel's table on the way back to his table. The teacher turns around from the circle and says, "Michael and Daniel, that is the last time I am going to say anything. Sit down and do that work."*

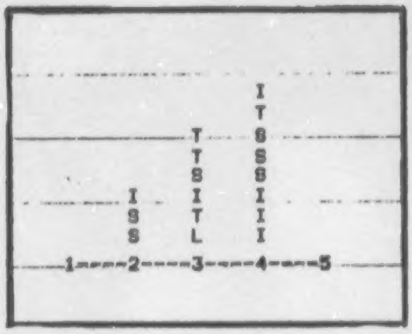
The Distraction #13-Coping Technique #11 linkage was coded as taking less than five seconds in 13 of the 17 instances (more than 75 percent) that occurred during Teacher C's reading instruction. The command technique immediately eliminated the student-student interactions 70 percent of the time they occurred, with the other 30 percent of the instances coded as continuing at a reduced level. The following histogram (Figure 10) displays the flow variable and shows that almost 50 percent of the instances received a Rating 4 (instruction was disrupted but the teacher was able to bring the group back to task). The other 53 percent of the instances received either a Rating 2 or 3.

Figure 10

DISTRACTION #13: Student-Student Interactions Which Are Disruptive
(33 INSTANCES)

COPING CODE #11: Teacher Giving DIRECT COMMAND or instruction (telling)
(17 INSTANCES)

FLOW



S = Small group   I = Individual   T = Transition   L - Large group

Teacher C also frequently used a command to redirect students who were not concentrating on the classroom activities (Distraction #15) or were disrupting her because of their physical position or location (Distraction #16). Examples of these linkages can be found in the Distraction

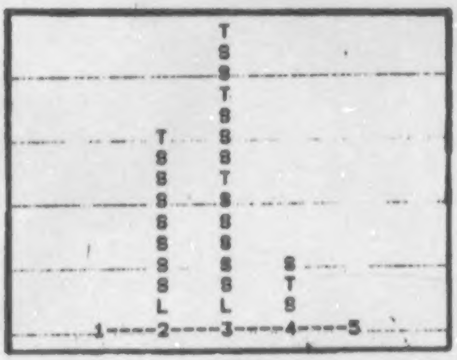
Section. The histograms for these linkages were very similar to those for the linkage of a command paired with Distraction #11, STUDENTS INTERRUPTING THE TEACHER (see Figure 8). The histograms of the command used for the purpose of eliminating Distractions #15 or #16 also show that the time lost was minimal (more than 70 percent of the time the linkage occurred, time lost was less than five seconds). The command immediately eliminated these distractions more than 85 percent of the time they occurred. The flow histogram, as displayed in Figure 11, is similar for Distraction #15 and shows that the linkages were usually a minor distraction to the teacher and her group or just to Teacher C (Ratings 2 and 3). Very few instances in both cases received a Rating 4.

Figure 11

DISTRACTION #16: Student's Physical Position or Location
(36 INSTANCES)

COPING CODE #11: Teacher giving DIRECT COMMAND or instruction (telling)
(26 INSTANCES)

FLOW



T = Transition L = Large group S = Small group

As shown from this analysis, certain linkages predominated Teacher C's profile due to frequency of occurrence and/or particular effectiveness of the coping technique. The histograms for all three variables (time, flow, and elimination) illustrated that the BODY LANGUAGE TECHNIQUE (Coping Technique #21) was particularly effective when Teacher C utilized it to cope with students interrupting her (Distraction #11).

The analysis of the command technique (Coping Technique #11) showed that Teacher C used it frequently in response to students interrupting her (Distraction #11), student-student interactions (Distraction #13), students not concentrating (Distraction #15), and students physical location (Distraction #16). The four linkages consistently revealed that the command technique took very little time to execute and immediately eliminated the above distractions in most cases. The flow histograms for these linkages showed variations in the degree of interruption depending upon the distraction. Many of these insights were interpreted from the data after the first six observations by the teacher participants during a feedback session. The following section describes what transpired because of these interpretations.

INTERVENTION - TEACHER C

Between the sixth and the seventh observation, a two-day data-feedback session (Intervention) was held for all eight of the teacher participants in the study. The data collected from the first six observations were provided for each teacher in the form of ethnographic or detailed descriptive notes and computer printouts taken from the quantitative checklists. Two sets of printouts were given to each teacher; one contained her individual histograms for each distraction and the technique used to cope with that distraction (or the distraction-coping linkage), and one contained histograms of the aggregate totals of the linkages for all eight teachers.

After discussing their common and unique distractions and particular coping techniques that seemed instrumental in eliminating specific distractions, the teachers were encouraged to modify their coping styles if they deemed it necessary or desirable. As a result of these discussions, the teachers then submitted plans of coping strategies that they wished to attempt to incorporate into their style.

During the data review sessions, Teacher C found, like most of the other teachers, that Distraction #11 (STUDENT VERBALLY INTERRUPTING THE TEACHER) occurred more than any other distraction in her classroom. By analyzing the ethnographic notes from the first six observations, she found that many of the interruptions were made by students outside the reading circle coming up to her to seek clarification about their work, to ask questions about pencils and erasers, or to ask permission to use the restroom. Teacher C's analysis was substantiated by the quantitative data which showed that 23 percent of all the distractions coded in her class were caused by students coming up to her circle to ask questions.

Teacher C decided to try to eliminate some of the interruptions by repeatedly reminding the students to try not to disrupt her instruction (Coping Technique #13) and instead to ask Aide #2 for clarification about their work. To solve the problem about pencils and erasers, Teacher C decided to have a surplus of both in a place where they would be easily accessible to all students. Teacher C also thought she would have the students help her decide upon a signal which they could use when they needed to use the restroom.

The most successful of these plans was the pencil and eraser solution. Having an overabundance of writing tools and regularly replenishing the stock reduced the number of problems and interruptions. Only one instance of a child asking about a pencil was recorded during the last three observations. Teacher C was very pleased with this result. She used the solution the remainder of the year and planned to continue with it the following year.

Concerning the restroom signal, Teacher C decided that it was as much of a problem for the students to get her attention with the signal as it was to come up and ask permission to leave the room. Therefore, this signal was dropped after a few days' use. Usually a quick nod took care of the interruption. Teacher C did remind the students about this problem, which she believed helped to reduce this type of distraction.

Although Teacher C was coded as using Coping Technique #13, CLARIFYING OR REMINDING OF RULES, less during the post-intervention observations than during the pre-intervention period (see Figure 12), she felt that she actually had not reduced her use of this strategy. She felt that perhaps she had stressed it more during the day before the observers arrived and after the observations were finished. Although the distraction category of STUDENTS INTERRUPTING THE TEACHER (Distraction #11) showed an increase after the intervention (see Figure 13), further analysis revealed that the interruptions from students coming up to the reading circle decreased 10 percent from the pre- to post-intervention observations. This decrease can be attributed partially to Aide #2, who helped individual students who were doing assignments at their seats and who needed clarification of their tasks. Thus, these students did not need to bother Teacher C during her instruction.

Another part of Teacher C's plan was to use more body language

FIGURE 12

GRAPHIC DISPLAY OF COPING TECHNIQUE PROFILES PRE AND POST INTERVENTION CONTRAST FOR TEACHER C

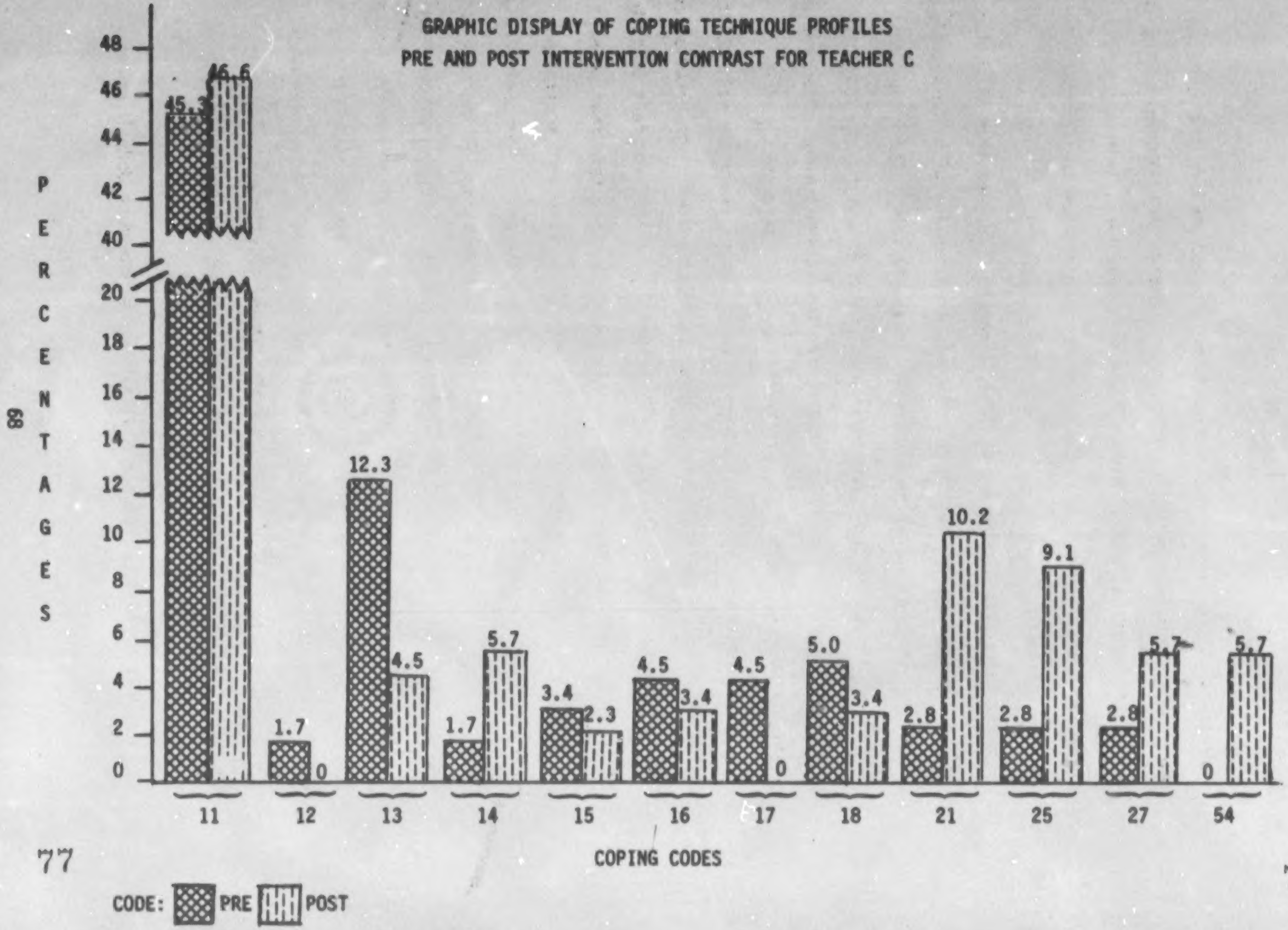
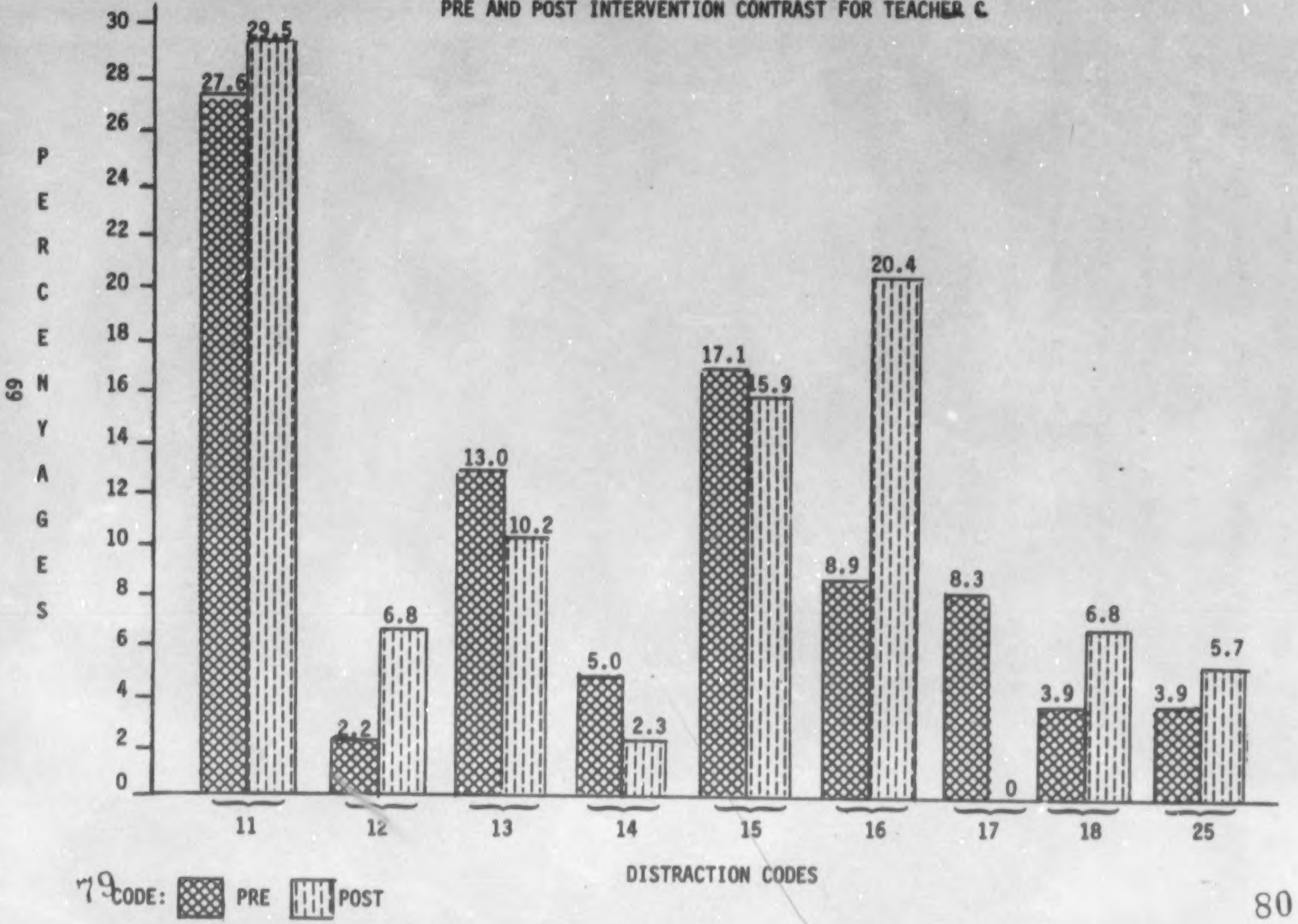


FIGURE 13

GRAPHIC DISPLAY OF DISTRACTION PROFILES
PRE AND POST INTERVENTION CONTRAST FOR TEACHER C



(Coping Technique #21) for the purpose of quickly eliminating distractions. During the intervention discussions (and as previously described in the Coping Techniques Section), it was noted that body language techniques used by participating teachers (e.g., facial expressions, gestures, eye contact, and signals), were easily employed and, in most cases, immediately eliminated distractions without major breaks in the flow of instruction. Teacher C also found this to be true in her own usage of the technique.

From the data, it was seen that Teacher C did use body language techniques 8 percent more often after the data review discussions. She felt that these strategies were effective in dealing with disruptions and thus continued to use them for the remainder of the school year.

Teacher C also used the body language technique in conjunction with the direct command (Coping Technique #54). The command usually was employed to get a student's attention, with the gesture or sign expressing the direction or instruction to the student. Teacher C was not coded as using this combination strategy at all during the first six observations, but it constituted more than 5 percent of her total recorded strategies during the last three observations. Examples of this technique follow:

> *The teacher calls Samuel's name and points to his chair. He sits down. She helps one girl individually at her table. She calls David's name. She walks to his chair, turns him around, and returns to help the girl.*
>
> *She puts her hand on Samuel's knee to turn him around and says, "You pay attention."*
>
> *She says shush to Daniel. She tells him to turn around and she puts her finger to her lips and says, "It is time to stop talking until people have finished."*

Teacher C also made plans to work on Distraction #17 (STUDENT INTENTIONALLY DISRUPTING) with some of her students who had particular problems with self-control. To aid these students, she resolved to use the "Glasser Contract" approach, which involved her asking a student the following three questions: (1) What are you doing? (2) Is what you're doing helping us or you? and (3) What could you do instead? After the questions, she and the student would write a "contract" stating the behavioral objective the student was going to try to improve upon. The student would then sign the contract to show that he or she did agree to work on the problem.

Teacher C was not coded as using this technique during the last observations as she felt it was time-consuming and disruptive to use during the one-hour reading period. She did, however, use the strategy at other times during the day when there was more of an opportunity to speak to students individually without interrupting other members of the class. Teacher C felt that this technique was a valid one and believed that it did help students solve some of their problems themselves. In fact, no instances of students intentionally disrupting the teacher were recorded for the last three observations. Teacher C surmised that some of this decrease was due to the transfer of one particular student who had caused many disruptions. She also felt that some of the decrease was actually due to the Glasser approach and so continued to utilize it in her classroom after the observations were completed.

Teacher C felt that the data review discussions after the sixth observation were very helpful to her in discovering her main classroom distractions and in learning of potentially effective ways to cope with them. As Teacher C attempted to incorporate the aforementioned techniques into her style during the last three observations, she found that some induced change and others were either uncomfortable for her to use or did not bring about the change she desired. She also felt that while three observations were insufficient for determining a significant change in her coping style, she did feel that the resulting data from these last observations gave her some idea of the effectiveness of the strategies that were used.

INTERVENTION - TEACHER Y

During the meetings following the first six observations, teachers reviewed the group and individual teacher profiles as recorded on computer readouts. Teacher Y, as well as the other teachers in the study, noted the most frequent distraction and developed a plan to use different coping techniques to reduce the number of distractions and/or the amount of time taken to cope with certain distractions.

Teacher Y's intervention plan was aimed at reducing the four most frequent distractions observed in her classroom during the first six observations: Distraction #11 (STUDENTS INTERRUPTING TEACHER), Distraction #14 (GENERAL STUDENT NOISE), and Distraction #15 (STUDENTS NOT CONCENTRATING ON CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES; i.e., not on task). The reader is referred to Figure 14, which illustrates the pre/post-intervention contrast.

To deal more effectively with these distractions, Teacher Y decided to try several coping or preventative coping techniques which were new to her. These constituted her intervention plan and she evaluated each following completion of all nine observations (see Figure 15).

Clarifying to the students what was scheduled for a given day and what was expected of them was a new technique which Teacher Y felt had a positive effect in her class. This clarification generally was provided in the mornings prior to the reading period and was designed to prevent some

FIGURE 14

GRAPHIC DISPLAY OF DISTRACTION PROFILES
PRE AND POST INTERVENTION CONTRAST FOR TEACHER Y

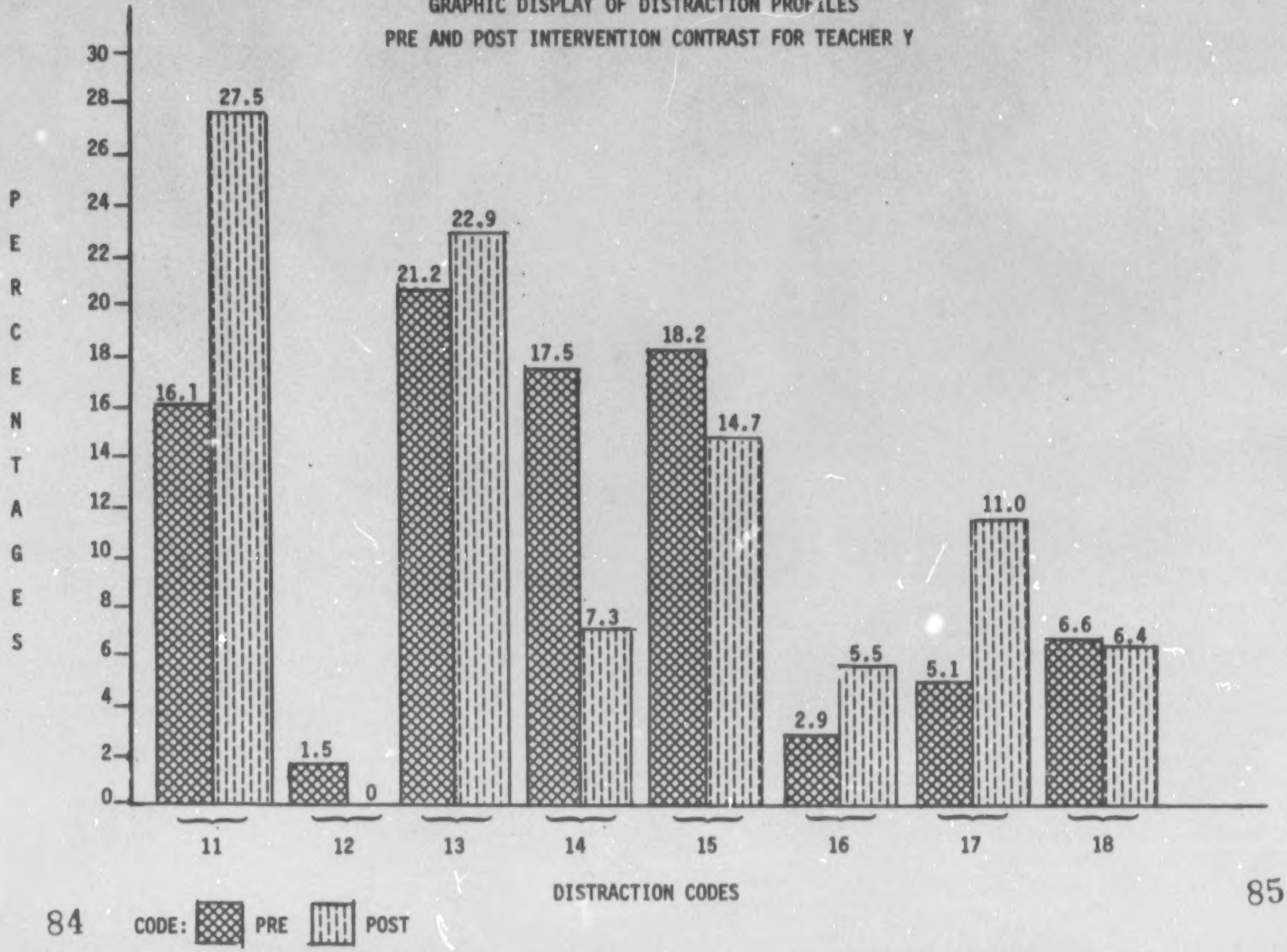
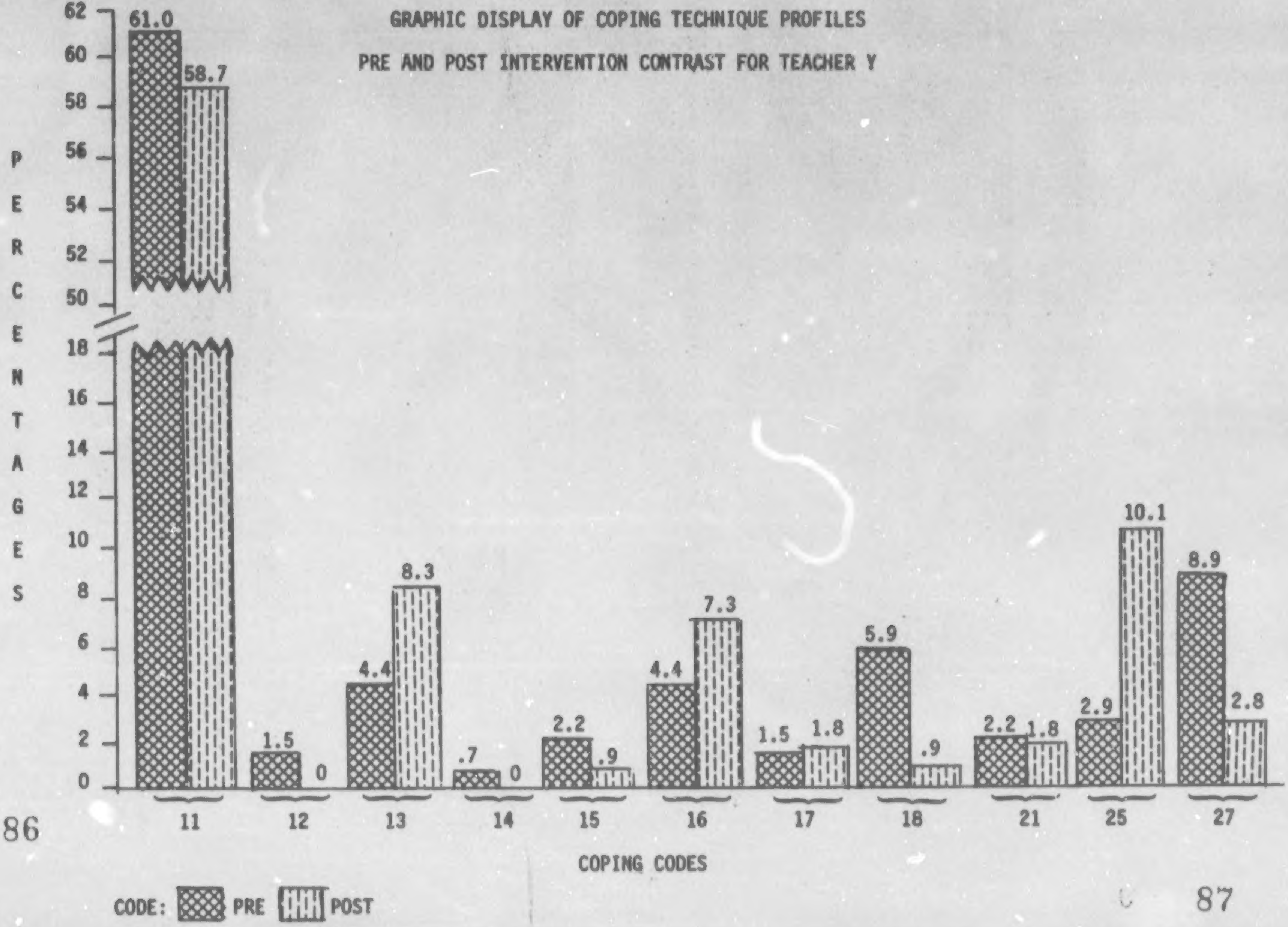


FIGURE 15

GRAPHIC DISPLAY OF COPING TECHNIQUE PROFILES

PRE AND POST INTERVENTION CONTRAST FOR TEACHER Y



potential distractions from occurring in the first place (a preventive coping technique).

> *The class enters quietly and stands behind their chairs. Margaret is passing out a worksheet, and some look to see what she is doing. The teacher says that everyone has a worksheet and gives some directions about the spelling being on the board. She also gives a reminder about the listening post area that only one person's hands should be on the filmstrip projector.*

To help control the classroom noise level, Teacher Y began using a tone bell. She felt it was no more effective than verbally telling students they were too noisy, but that it added variety and therefore was moderately successful. She also used the bell as a signal for reading groups to rotate and considered it more successful as a signal than as a noise leveler.

> *She rings the chime seven times and the class gets quieter. Then she rings it one time and the students move to their reading stations . . . . There is some noise from the class and the teacher rings the chimes nine times. . . . There is noise from the class, mostly from the listening post area. The teacher rings the chime seven times and the class settles down a little.*

Checking to see if individual students had been listening was another new strategy implemented by Teacher Y. She would call on those students who tended not to follow directions and ask them to repeat the instructions. Because they knew the teacher might call on them, these students tended to listen better.

> *Susan is chattering and the teacher says, "Susan, where is that voice supposed to be?" Susan says, "Inside of me." . . . The teacher says, "Joe, where are you supposed to be right now?"*

One nonverbal coping technique which did not prove effective in reducing the noise level was pointing to a statement written on the chalkboard: "We do our work quietly." To even get their attention, Teacher Y found that she would often have to tell them, "We do our work quietly."

Using the sign on the board, since a nonverbal gesture took too much time, she modified it and used it in conjunction with direct verbal commands.

She also planned to separate "buddies" and any students who were disruptive combinations. She did this to some extent, particularly after the observations were completed, and would continue to use the technique in the future.

Teacher Y had planned to use worksheet activities along with soundstrips at the listening post, which had been a source of numerous disruptions prior to the intervention meetings. She felt worksheet activities would help students to concentrate and stay on task better. Although she did not use this technique, she still felt it would be an effective technique and so planned to use it in the future.

OTHER FINDINGS

Time Lost Due to Distractions

Part of the original intent of this study was to determine approximately how much time was lost due to distractions and the coping techniques used to attempt to eliminate those distractions. Two methods were utilized to collect this information. One required each teacher participant to respond to a set of questions (Teacher's Daily Log - see Appendix C) after every observation. Question #7 asked the teacher to estimate how much time was lost due to the distractions that occurred during the reading period. The teacher would then respond with a subjective rating (in minutes) of the time loss. The second method was utilized by the quantitative nonparticipant observer and resulted in presenting a more objective rating. The observer marked with a check on the quantitative checklist (see Appendix D) how much time she felt was lost due to the distraction and the coping technique linked with that distraction. The five quantitative ratings on the checklist, which were numbered one through five consecutively, included: less than five seconds, six to ten seconds, eleven to twenty seconds, twenty-one to forty seconds, and more than forty seconds.

From the analysis of Teacher C's daily log entries, it was found that she believed that, on the average, eight minutes per observation (each approximately 58 minutes in length), or 14 percent of the reading period, were lost due to distraction-coping linkages. Teacher C's approximations varied from five to fifteen minutes, depending upon the day of the observation. The observer found that the approximate time lost due to distraction-coping linkages was actually four minutes, or 7 percent of the reading period, per observation. Because of the range of the rating intervals (i.e., a two rating could be as brief as six seconds or as long as ten seconds), if one were to consistently consider the low-range estimates, the time loss for Teacher C could be as little as two and a half minutes for each observation. On the other hand, if one were to consistently consider the high-range estimates, the time loss could be as much as six minutes. The mid-range estimate of four minutes is perhaps the most representative of the actual time lost.

Teacher Y believed that she lost approximately seven and a half minutes per observation (about 56 minutes in length), or 11 percent of the reading period, because of distractions and the coping techniques used. Her approximations also varied from five to fifteen minutes, depending upon the observation. The observer coded Teacher Y as having lost approximately four and a half minutes per observation, or 8 percent of her reading instruction. The high- and low-range estimates could be as much as seven minutes or as little as three minutes, respectively, per observation.

The following histograms (Figure 16) depict a further illustration of the amount of time that was lost during Teacher C's and Teacher Y's reading periods for all nine observations. These displays show that 68 percent of the total linkages that occurred in Teacher C's class took less than five seconds (Rating 1) compared with 50 percent of the same for Teacher Y. Eighteen percent of the linkages that took place in Teacher C's class received a Rating 2 (six to ten seconds) by the observers. Teacher Y's linkages were coded 30 percent of the time in this same category. The remainder of the linkages that were coded fell into the Rating 3, 4, or 5 categories (eleven to twenty, twenty-one to forty, and more than forty seconds, respectively), and constituted 14 percent of the total linkages that occurred in Teacher C's class and 20 percent that occurred in Teacher Y's class.

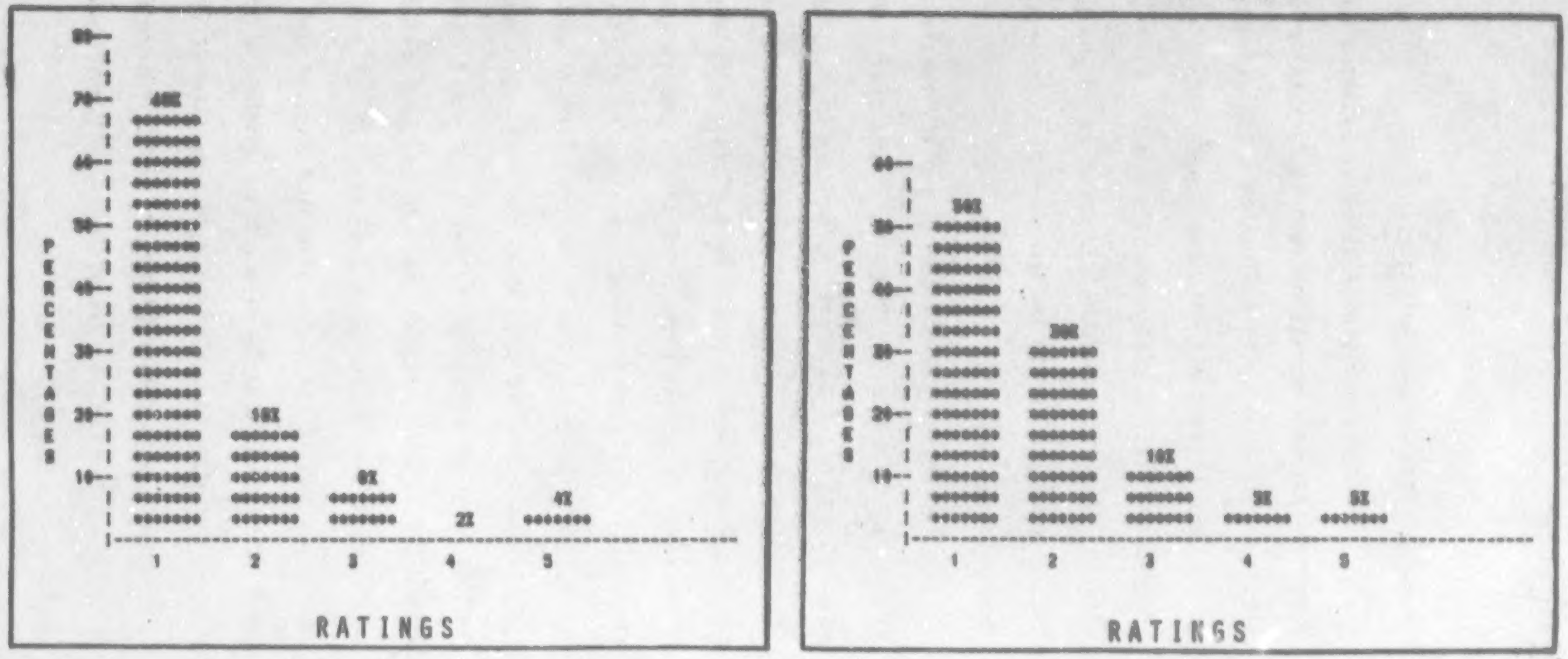
Of the 49 linkages that were given a Rating 3, 4, or 5 in Teacher Y's class, all but one were student-generated distractions. In Teacher C's class, of the 38 linkages given such ratings, all but seven were student-generated. Six of these seven were coded as teacher-generated disruptions.

From this analysis, it was found that both Teacher C and Teacher Y spent approximately four minutes per 50-minute reading period dealing with distractions. Both of the teachers estimated this time loss to be even more than the possible high-range estimates that the quantitative observer coded. The analysis also showed that a large majority of the linkages that occurred in both classrooms took less than ten seconds (86 percent for Teacher C; 80 percent for Teacher Y).

FIGURE 16

GRAPHIC DISPLAY OF "TIME" HISTOGRAMS FOR TEACHERS C AND Y
(ALL NINE OBSERVATIONS)

TEACHER C'S "TIME HISTOGRAM" TEACHER Y'S "TIME HISTOGRAM"



TOTAL NUMBER OF DISTRACTIONS = 269 TOTAL NUMBER OF DISTRACTIONS = 246

High-Low Patterns and Contrasts

For the purpose of looking at patterns and contrasts between observations, an analysis of each day's total distractions and coping techniques that occurred in Teacher C's classroom was done. The daily totals were broken down into the appropriate distraction and coping technique categories so that one could see how many occurrences of a specific distraction or coping technique occurred on any given day. These were then compared to see if any patterns or contrasts existed throughout the nine observations.

The analysis of Teacher C's daily totals for Distraction #11, STUDENT INTERRUPTING THE TEACHER, showed that the second, third, fourth, seventh, and ninth observations had the highest number of occurrences of this distraction. Teacher C speculated that these totals were high because Aide #2 was absent. Part of this aide's responsibility was to help alleviate any interruptions that students who were outside Teacher C's reading group caused. However, by looking at Teacher C's daily log and the ethnographic notes, it was found that Aide #2 was present on those days and was absent on the days when the total occurrences of students interrupting the teacher was much lower. No exact reason could be pinpointed, although Teacher C thought that she may have set firmer ground rules about interrupting her on the days that Aide #2 was absent.

On two of the three days that Aide #2 was absent, Teacher C was coded as using Coping Technique #11, COMMAND OR DIRECT INSTRUCTIONS, more than on the other observation days. Because of Aide #2's absence, Teacher C felt that she probably gave more direct instructions to students working at their seats (Aide #2 was assigned to handle the problems or questions that occurred there).

The speculation concerning the effect of Aide #2's absence was also supported by the fact that Distraction #12, STUDENT SEEKING CLARIFICATION OF TASK, was coded as being virtually eliminated upon Aide #2's assignment to Teacher C's class, and the fact that the highest occurrence rate of Distraction #12 was on the day of the eighth observation when Aide #2 was not present. The observation totals also showed that one of the three highest daily totals of Teacher C's use of Coping Technique #18, TELLING HOW A TASK CAN BE DONE, occurred on the eighth observation. The other two highest totals were on the first day of observation (Aide #2 was not present) and on the second day of observation (Aide #2's first day in Teacher C's class).

Another distraction that Aide #2 could have possibly helped reduce was that of student-student interactions which were disruptive (Distraction #13). The highest rate of occurrence for this distraction was on the first day of observation, which was before Aide #2 was assigned to Teacher C's classroom. The subsequent observation totals showed reduced levels of occurrence of this distraction, especially on days Aide #2 was present.

A specific analysis was done for Distraction #16, STUDENT'S PHYSICAL POSITION OR LOCATION, as the percentage totals showed that this distraction occurred 8.9 percent of the time before the intervention and 20.4 percent after the intervention (see Figure 13 in Intervention Section). The analysis of the individual instances of this distraction during the first six observations showed no specific patterns emerging, except for the fact that the distraction occurred almost as often within the reading circle as outside of it. The analysis of the last three observations showed that almost two-thirds of the total occurrences of Distraction #16 took place in one reading group. The other instances were by students located outside the reading circle. Teacher C attributed this increase of occurrence to a change that she made during the sixth and seventh observations. Because four students transferred out during this time, Teacher C was able to reorganize her reading groups. A few students who had been working independently were put back into a reading group when the students transferred. Thus, these students were found to be the ones who caused the change in the totals for the physical position distraction (Distraction #16). The following are examples of incidences of Distraction #16 that occurred during the eighth observation:

> *She [Teacher C] stands at the rear of the room and says, "Okay, Secrets and Shanda and Daniel, I want you up at the circle with your pencils." They move to the circle and Daniel sits in the teacher's chair. The teacher comes up to the circle and teasingly says, "Am I going to get to be a student today?" Daniel then moves to another chair. The teacher gives directions on matching contractions with the words they are made from. The group then does this part individually. One girl leaves the circle to get an eraser from the can. Daniel says that he is finished and the teacher tells him to just sit there quietly. The teacher says, "Flip your book to page 13." She explains the directions on marking words that have the same vowel sounds. She gets up and helps Derek find the spot and understand the directions. Three students at the circle get up from their chairs with questions about that page. They continue working independently. The teacher resets the timer. Some of the students are finished with the page and they are restless. She says, "Sit down" three times, "we are waiting for Alan to finish." She says shush to Derek, who is trying to tell her something. The teacher says, "Okay, page 14." She tells Daniel to turn around.*

In summary, these comparisons and contrasts that have been made between the daily totals point out that causes or reasons for each difference cannot always be explained. Teacher C believed that by changing management details such as reading groups would help reduce some of the distractions. At times this did occur, but at other times, for unexplained reasons, it did not. Teacher C also found that having a second aide in the room to handle individual questions and problems showed some evidence of helping in the reduction of distractions. But, on the other hand, she discovered that because of the naturalistic approach this study took, her hypotheses could not always be supported by the data.

CONCLUSIONS

The primary purpose of this study was to investigate the events that disrupt classroom instruction (distractions) and the techniques that teachers use to cope with the distractions (coping techniques). Each coping technique, as used for the purpose of eliminating a specific distraction (the linkage), was analyzed for its effectiveness. Effectiveness was measured by three variables:

(1) The instructional time loss due to the distraction,

(2) The degree the flow of instructional activity was interrupted,

(3) The degree to which the distraction was eliminated after the coping technique was used.

DISTRACTIONS

Each teacher involved in this study found that a large majority of the distractions that occurred in her classroom were generated by the students. Teacher C found that 88 percent of the distractions in her class were created by the students and Teacher Y found that 91 percent of her distractions were student generated. Because these student-generated distractions made up such a large percentage of the total, the remaining distractions, such as communications to the teacher, visitors, school management activities, outside noises, etc., were minimal.

The analysis of Teacher C's and Teacher Y's student-generated distractions showed that many of them fell into similar predominant categories and that the percentage totals for most of these categories were also similar for the two teachers. Both teachers found that more than 20 percent of their disruptions were caused by students interrupting them (Distraction

#11), and that more than 16 percent of the total were due to students not concentrating (Distraction #15).

Another major distraction was that of student-student interactions that were disruptive (Distraction #13). Unlike the other seven teachers involved in this study, Teacher Y's profile showed a dominance of these disruptions (22 percent). Teacher C had 12 percent of her total distractions coded in this category. A difference in percentages for the two teachers also appeared in the student noise category (Distraction #14). GENERAL STUDENT NOISE in Teacher Y's class was a distraction 13 percent of her total, compared with 4 percent for Teacher C. Teacher C found that she had more distractions than Teacher Y coded in the physical position category (Distraction #16). Teacher C had 13 percent of her total classified as such, whereas Teacher Y had only 4 percent. Many of the distractions took place within their reading circles.

After further analyzing the distraction categories, it was found that the distractions in Teacher C's and Teacher Y's classrooms showed some distinct differences. Teacher Y's distractions, as shown by the percentage in the student-student interaction category (Distraction #13), tended to be more student-student or group oriented, whereas Teacher C's interruptions were usually caused by individual students. A large portion of Teacher Y's distractions took place at her listening post area and during transition when groups changed location. Teacher C found that she was coded as having very few of these interruptions, but that most of her disruptions were caused by individual students both within and outside of the reading circle. Many of these distractions were initiated by students who had questions or needed clarification of a task that they were working on at their seats.

The differences within these categories can be attributed mainly to the full-time aides in Teacher C's and Teacher Y's classrooms. Aide #1 in Teacher Y's class was given the responsibility of answering individual questions and clarifying instructions about seat work that students may have had during the reading period. She also took care of many of the individual discipline problems that occurred around the room (other than those at Teacher Y's reading circle) so that Teacher Y would not be interrupted by this during her instruction. Thus, Teacher Y, as her profile revealed, took care of most of the general group problems, such as those at the listening posts, and left the individual problems for the aide to handle.

In Teacher C's class, Aide #1 was positioned in the room so that as she worked with her own group, she could also easily handle any problems that occurred at the listening post. This reduced these distractions to Teacher C and thus were not as evident in the distraction profile. Teacher C took care of most of the clarification questions that arose while students were working at their seats. When Aide #2 was hired, Teacher C gave her the responsibility of helping answer students' questions, which seemed to alleviate some of the interruptions to Teacher C while she was at her reading circle.

COPING TECHNIQUES

To cope with these distractions as they occurred in these classrooms, both Teacher C and Teacher Y used a variety of techniques, both verbal and nonverbal, so that the disruptions would be eliminated as quickly as possible. As with the distractions, the percentage totals for most of the coping technique categories were similar for Teacher C and Teacher Y. Very few categories were found to have any marked differences.

The majority of the distractions in both classrooms were dealt with by the verbal use of DIRECT COMMANDS OR INSTRUCTIONS (Coping Technique #11). One marked difference between the two teachers was noted in this category. Direct instructions made up 60 percent of the total coping techniques used by Teacher Y compared with a 45 percent total for Teacher C. This technique was used by the two teachers because of its ease of utilization. The time lost by use of the direct command was minimal, usually taking less than ten seconds. The technique usually restricted the disruption to the teacher (and not to the students) or limited it to a minor distraction to the teacher and the students. The elimination histogram (see Figure 7 in Coping Technique section) showed that the direct command immediately eliminated the distraction more than 60 percent of the time for both teachers.

The elimination histogram for Coping Technique #11 also showed a difference between Teacher C and Teacher Y. Teacher C was coded as immediately eliminating distractions with commands 15 percent more of the time than Teacher Y. Teacher Y's histogram showed that when commands were used, the distractions continued at a reduced level 25 percent more often than for Teacher C. Teacher Y's distractions were mostly group oriented and thus were much more difficult to immediately eliminate. And as Teacher C dealt mainly with individuals, immediate elimination of problems was much easier. From these data it can also be speculated that Teacher Y's level of tolerance and acceptance of distractions was much higher than Teacher C's.

Another technique used by both teachers to respond to distractions was that of CLARIFYING OR REMINDING OF RULES which already had been established in the classroom. Teacher C used this technique almost 10 percent of her total coping profile. Teacher C was coded as using the reminding technique 6 percent of the total coping techniques she used. Both teachers used this strategy most often in response to the distraction of students not concentrating on their tasks. This technique was found to take very little time and to break the flow enough to receive Ratings 3 and 4 (eleven to forty seconds) more than 70 percent of the time it was used. But it eliminated the disruption 88 percent of the time for Teacher C and more than 50 percent for Teacher Y.

The nonverbal techniques were found to be particularly effective for both teachers. The use of a gesture or signal to resolve an interruption showed little loss of time, usually kept the disruption just to the teacher, and produced immediate elimination in all but two instances. These same results were found for the selected instances when the teachers were coded as choosing to ignore a distraction.

Because Teacher Y used the direct command 60 percent of the time a distraction occurred, and Teacher C used it 45 percent of the time, further analysis of the percentages in the other categories was done. It was concluded that Teacher C used a wider variety of other techniques (she was coded as using 26 of the 34 coping technique categories) than Teacher Y (she was coded as using 18 of the 34 categories). Again, these findings can probably be attributed to the fact that the aide in Teacher Y's class handled many of the individual disruptions, making it unnecessary for Teacher Y to use a large variety of techniques.

TIME LOST DUE TO DISTRACTIONS

Determining the amount of time lost due to the various distractions and coping techniques was another main intent of this study. It was found that both Teacher C and Teacher Y estimated that more time was lost because of disruptions than the observer coded. The quantitative observer found that approximately four minutes per observation (each about 58 minutes in length) was lost due to distraction-coping linkages in Teacher C's class. Teacher Y was coded as losing approximately four and a half minutes per observation (each about 56 minutes in length). Because of the range of rating intervals, the mid-range estimates (the ones given here) were considered to be the most representative of the time lost. The teachers had estimated a loss of seven to eight minutes per observation.

INTERVENTION

Many of the above findings about the distractions and the coping techniques were noted during the intervention discussion sessions which took place after the first six observations. The teachers involved in the study were presented with the data from these observations so that they could analyze the results for their own classes and for the teachers as a group. As a result of the discussions of the data, both Teacher C and Teacher Y developed plans to modify their coping styles.

After determining which distractions occurred most frequently, Teacher C and Teacher Y attempted to incorporate new coping techniques that were shown by the data to be most effective to deal with disruptions. Both teachers found new techniques that worked, that they felt comfortable using, and that they felt they would continue using in the future. They also found new strategies that they felt were less effective or uncomfortable to use and that they decided to either modify or stop using them completely.

Some of these changes were reflected in the data from the last three observations. But others which the teachers thought occurred did not show up. It was felt that three observations were insufficient to be able to note significant change and that some of the strategies were used when the observers were not present and, thus, were not coded.

Many of the new techniques that Teacher C and Teacher Y felt were easiest to incorporate into their styles to help reduce disruptions were classroom or teacher management strategies, which could be planned out and established before the reading periods. These included changing the physical arrangement of the classroom, making materials more available, incorporating new activities at centers, etc. Some of the more difficult strategies to incorporate into the teachers' styles were found to be those that were used to deal with spontaneous actions. These included such techniques as reminding students of rules, clarifying tasks, using new signals or gestures, etc.

Teacher C and Teacher Y felt that the review sessions were very informative and helpful, as the data helped them to realize what the main distractions were in their classrooms. These sessions also aided them in incorporating new techniques that were found to be particularly effective in reducing distractions. This and their direct involvement in the data analysis was the essence of the study, as it made them aware of the distractions that can occur in their rooms, how they cope with them, and how they could possibly change their classroom teaching styles.

INSIGHTS OF PARTICIPANTS

INSIGHTS - TEACHER C

Teacher C, who was involved in this project from its onset, felt that the whole process of Interactive Research and Development in Teaching (IR & DT) was worthwhile and beneficial to her as a classroom teacher. Through her "interaction" with other teachers in this project, many new ideas and methods were learned by Teacher C. By participating in the "research" portion of IR & DT, Teacher C found that it *is* viable for teachers to investigate and to draw conclusions about their own teaching styles and problems within their classrooms. The "development" aspect showed Teacher C that she and other teachers can receive immediate teacher-oriented feedback from the data that are collected so that practical changes can be made if desired. As Teacher C had been teaching only three years at the time of this writing, she viewed the total process as an invaluable growing experience, one in which she became more aware of her teaching style and classroom management techniques.

During the course of this entire process, Teacher C came to realize the following:

1. The Level I teachers involved in the study taught at two different sites; three teachers were at one site and one was at another site. The three teachers (one of whom was Teacher C) at the same site had definite advantages over the teacher at the other site. Teacher C felt that the three teachers were able to interact more, have better communication with others, and, as a result, become better organized and get tasks done faster than the teacher at the other site. Teacher C

recommended, then, that at least two teachers on a team should be at each participating site.

2. Teacher C found that school district and administrative support are a necessity for a project of this nature. Many logistics (such as substitutes, budget items, etc.) were handled by the district and without this support the project would have been much more difficult to pursue.
3. Teacher C found that an immense amount of time was involved in most facets of the project. She was glad that she did not have too many other commitments during the course of the study and thus had the time, without outside pressures, for the meetings and other activities that were required.

The first two months of the project were dedicated to determining a question or problem that Teacher C and her three other colleagues on the team had in their classrooms and that they wished to research. The team (the four teachers, the researcher, and the trainer/developer) spent many hours brainstorming, reading pertinent literature, and observing each other's classes before coming up with a question acceptable to all. Some of the insights that Teacher C had during this phase of the project are as follows:

1. Teacher C felt that the interactions with colleagues who were not involved in the project were essential in determining a question to be studied, as the team members tended to be narrow minded about specific problems they wanted to see studied. Teacher C believed that the opinions of others were an important aspect of this phase, as it made the team aware of more possibilities to consider.

2. As this phase was initiated only a couple of weeks before school started, many question possibilities that would have required data collection from the first day of school could not be considered. Teacher C would like to have seen the question-determination phase initiated during the late spring. This would have allowed time for a research design to be created before the opening of school, if necessary.

3. Teacher C also felt that one of the most difficult problems during this time period was the necessity to narrow the question once it was determined. Limiting the outcomes to be studied so they would be workable was a major task and was very time consuming.

After the question was agreed upon, the next phase of the project included the selection and formulation of the research methodology to be used. This period resulted in a research design that the team considered to be a systematic approach to inquiring into the selected question. Teacher C had the following observations during this time:

1. Part of this task included observations of other teachers' classrooms. This was done both at the teachers' own school sites and at different schools. Teacher C believed that this activity was very beneficial, both to the research design and to herself professionally. She would like to see some type of organized program initiated that would allow every teacher in the district to observe other classrooms.

2. It was found during this period that some meetings on the weekends were necessary. The team found that after-school meetings

were not as productive as they would have liked them to be because of time limitations and general fatigue. The weekend meetings were held on about five different occasions and proved to be very helpful and productive.

3. During this phase particularly (but during the other phases as well), Teacher C felt that the researcher was of prime importance to the group. His specific knowledge of different research methodology was a necessity for the creation of a workable design.
4. According to Teacher C, the technical assistance given by Far West Laboratory and the National Advisory Panel (NAP) during the formulation of the design helped the team clarify its methodology and goals. Teacher C would have changed the fact that the team representatives, after reading the written critiques by the NAP, were not able to meet with NAP personnel again to review certain portions with them. Portions of these critiques needed clarification which was not available because the notes were given to the team members after their meeting with NAP.
5. Teacher C felt that the team became much more efficient as the project progressed. Instead of meeting as a group all of the time, they (individually or with a partner) completed minor tasks and then brought them back for group discussion and approval. This saved valuable group time for more important matters.

The data collection phase began shortly after the research design was completed. The data collection plan included intervention sessions in which the teachers met on two separate occasions to discuss the data that had been gathered during the first six observations. Teacher C felt that these sessions were part of the essence of the whole project, since through them she was able to see what the major distractions were in her classroom and then discuss these problems with the others in the group. After these discussions, the teachers formulated plans to modify their coping styles. The following are some comments Teacher C had concerning the data collection and intervention procedures:

1. Teacher C was surprised how little she was bothered by the presence of the observers and the microphone during the data collection. She felt there was little disruption to her instructional activities because of the observations. She attributed this lack of disruption to the fact that the observers had been in the room prior to the formal observations (two orientation sessions), which helped make her and her students more at ease with the other adults in the room.
2. Teacher C felt that she could have done a better job on her evening tape recordings but at times found that she could not remember incidents that had occurred in the mornings. In retrospect, she wished she had recorded her observations immediately following the reading period so that she would have had better notes about daily occurrences to refer to during the data analysis.
3. With regard to the intervention portion of the data collection, Teacher C felt that two half days, rather than two whole days,

would have been sufficient for the teachers to review the data. Later, Teacher C wished she had been more specific in her intervention plan, and she also wished she had tried more new techniques during the last three observations. With a more definite plan, it would have been easier to determine whether changes had taken place during the observations that followed the intervention sessions. Teacher C also recommends that an informal daily self-evaluation form be devised to remind the teacher each day of the changes she/he had intended to make. Teacher C found it difficult at times to remember to try some of the new techniques that she had planned to use.

4. Teacher C made plans to eliminate or reduce a variety of problems in her room. She found it much easier to change physical or management items than to change portions of her teaching style. It took a much more conscious effort to incorporate into her teaching style any new techniques discussed during the intervention.

After the data were collected and processed, each teacher was asked to analyze her own data and then write up the findings. Teacher C found this to be a very rewarding experience, since she was able to see first hand what caused the most distractions in her classroom and what coping techniques appeared to work best for her. The following comments are based upon various problems that Teacher C recognized during the time that this analysis and case study were written.

1. Teacher C, like the majority of the other teachers involved, found that a large percentage of the distractions that occurred

in her class were due to students interrupting the teacher (Distraction #11). As the analysis of this category progressed, Teacher C discovered that many of these interruptions were due to students seeking clarification about their work, but were categorized as an interruption to the teacher. A separate category had been designated for the clarification distractions (Distraction #12), but was not used as such most of the time by the observers. The following example involved a student seeking clarification of a task (Distraction #12), which was coded as a student interrupting the teacher (Distraction #11):

> *A girl comes to the teacher with a question about a task card. The teacher smiles and helps her. The girl comes back to the circle again and the teacher tells her to bring her book. She does. The girl goes back to her seat, gets her book, and comes back to the teacher. The teacher instructs her how to do the pages in the workbook.*

2. Teacher C also found discrepancies in the coping technique categories that included commands (#11) and reminding of rules (#13). Teacher C felt that some of the techniques that were coded as commands were actually a brief reminding of rules. Examples of what Teacher C felt were reminding of rules coded as commands follow:

> *To the class she says, "You are still supposed to be reading."*
>
> *She says loudly to Michael, "Michael, it's time to listen."*
>
> *"Raise your hand and Aide #2 will come and help you."*

3. Because of the above problems, Teacher C recommends that the categories which include student interrupting the teacher and

commands or direct instructions be broken down to avoid confusion during the analysis. More specific categories need to be designated so that the teacher can actually determine where the interruptions occurred or what caused them.

4. Teacher C knew that she had distractions because of students seeking clarification of tasks, but she was somewhat surprised at how often this distraction occurred during the nine observations. She allowed this interruption to occur because she felt it was better to answer the students' questions than to have them sit at their seats and not do their work when they were unsure of how to do it. Teacher C felt she would continue with this policy, but would remind the students that Aide #1 also could answer their questions.
5. Teacher C was not surprised when she discovered that a large percentage of the distractions that occurred were caused by the same four or five students. The team had discussed observing individual students when formulating the research design, but then discarded the idea because of the amount of data that would have to be collected. Teacher C would like to see this idea included in future projects of this type.
6. Teacher C was surprised that the category containing the ignoring coping technique (#25) was coded as being used infrequently. She felt that there were many instances each day when she chose to ignore distractions instead of recognizing them with other coping techniques. Teacher C believed that this technique was necessary because if every distraction was

commented upon, very little teaching would result. She also realized that it was difficult for an observer to determine if the teacher actually ignored a distraction or just did not notice it.

7. Certain preventative coping techniques, such as the use of other adults in the classroom or special placement of materials or student groups, also did not show up in the data as much as Teacher C expected. Starting the study earlier in the year, she believed, would have captured more of the essence of these techniques so that they, too, could have been investigated in more depth.
8. During the data analysis, Teacher C discovered that many distractions in her classroom were taken care of by Aide #1. These distractions and the techniques used by the aide to cope with them did not show up at all in the data. Teacher C would like to have seen this information gathered and she felt it was an important aspect of her classroom. She recommended that this be incorporated in a future project.
9. Many of the problems with the data analysis, as stated above, were due to the team's lack of time to field test the data collection methods. Teacher C realized from this experience the importance of allowing plenty of time for a trial run of a mini-data collection and analysis period before the actual gathering of the data is done.

As the teachers involved in the study completed their data analyses, they were asked to write their own case studies to report their findings.

Teacher C found this to be very rewarding since she was able to express her reasons for data results and to pass this information on to others at the same time. During this time, Teacher C had the following insights:

1. Teacher C found it very helpful to meet daily with the other teachers involved in the project during this phase. In this way, they were able to react together about their analyses and their writing. Also, a general continuity among the case studies was established because of this interaction.
2. She found that the observers were very helpful because they were able to give her a nonparticipant and objective viewpoint concerning her teaching style and the distractions that occurred in her classroom. Teacher C hoped that other teachers would have the opportunity to be observed because she believed that the insights provided by the observers would help to eliminate some of the future problems that might result from distractions.

INSIGHTS - TEACHER Y

In reflecting upon her participation in the study, Teacher Y believed the most significant lasting effect for her will be an ongoing awareness of distractions, their causes, and possible coping techniques. She found during the study that she was not consciously aware of many distractions occuring in her classroom and that some of the coping techniques which she used repeatedly were relatively ineffective. As a result of the study, however, she expects to be more immediately aware of when distractions occur, of how she copes with them, and of the effectiveness of her coping techniques. Teacher Y believes she also will constantly be on the lookout for new and more effective coping techniques.

Regarding the effect of the study on other teachers who may read about it or learn about it in inservice training programs, Teacher Y feels they, too, will find themselves becoming increasingly aware of their own classroom styles and coping techniques. Once teachers have examined the information in this study, according to Teacher Y, they will find themselves taking note of distractions and how they handle (cope with) them. Just as the teacher participants will continue to have an expanded awareness of distractions without the aid of classroom observers, so will those teachers who read about this study.

Teacher Y believes that having observers in her classroom helped her initially in identifying distractions and coping techniques. But now that she has an increased awareness of the effect of these factors on her classroom management, she feels she can personally identify distractions as they occur.

There is no doubt in Teacher Y's mind that this study has increased validity and has greater potential for positively affecting other teachers because of the high level of teacher involvement in planning and conducting the study. The study question itself had been selected by the teachers because they suspected that distractions produced a significant impact on their classes. Teachers helped develop the research design so that the question could be examined in a manner which, hopefully, would be comfortable for the teacher participants. The results of the study have been, for the most part, examined and analyzed by the teacher participants, rather than by professional researchers. This is not to say that professionals were not available to give necessary guidance regarding research techniques, etc. What it does say is that the most significant elements of the study, as far as the teachers were concerned, definitely would not be lost.

Teacher Y noted a number of specifics about her own classroom and teaching style which came to her attention as a result of the study. Some of these included:

1. Teacher Y was surprised at the high number of distractions in her classroom and at the amount of time they consumed. She became aware of many things which she previously had not realized were distractions.
2. She was surprised that a large percentage of the distractions were caused by the same five or six students. She felt that awareness of this would enable her to have better classroom control. She also felt that in future classes she would quickly identify the students who caused most of the distractions and work harder to channel their energies toward more productive endeavors.
3. Examination of the ethnographic notes revealed to Teacher Y that her attitude was more serious than she would have imagined. She felt that she was most serious during the reading period, which was when the notes were taken by observers. Teacher Y attributed this serious atmosphere primarily to the major emphasis at the school and through various special projects on elevating low reading achievement scores. Teacher Y may also have appeared more serious during the reading periods than she normally was because she felt she "stiffened up" somewhat in the presence of the observers.
4. Teacher Y knew before the study that she relied heavily on

Aide #1, but through the study she became aware that this reliance was even greater than she would have imagined.

5. The ethnographic notes made Teacher Y aware that she made extensive use of one particular verbal command or reminder: "Your voices are inside of you." She felt that overuse of a particular command would diminish its effectiveness. The ethnographic notes taken after the intervention meetings, following the first six observations, clearly indicated a sharp reduction in the use of the verbal command in question.
6. Teacher Y realized that a significant portion of distractions occurring at the listening post were due to one of the reading groups being much larger than the others. She decided that an alternative activity for part of the group would be a possible solution for a similar situation in the future. In this case, she did not want to split the group up since it was based on similar reading abilities.
7. The study confirmed Teacher Y's personal observation that those students who caused distractions because they weren't on task and who needed frequent clarification of instructions were the same students who were weak in listening skills.
8. After examination of all of the study data and discussion with the observers, Teacher Y decided to make a change in the setup of her reading period in future classes. Although the change will be simple to make, Teacher Y feels it will be significant in reducing distractions. In the past, her five reading group activities have been situated in the room so that the group she

was with and the group the aide was with were right next to each other. This meant that three consecutive groups did not have direct adult supervision. Teacher Y plans to separate the two supervised groups, leaving no more than two consecutive groups without direct adult supervision. This, of course, will reduce the amount of isolation from adults any student will have at any time. Such reduced isolation undoubtedly will be accompanied by reduction in distractions.

9. Teacher Y stated that the study, overall, had been considerably more involved than she had expected. She was attending evening classes on the same days that afternoon meetings were scheduled for the study participants. She recommends that future participants in similar studies keep other professional commitments to a minimum during the period of the study.

APPENDIX A

DISTRACTION CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM

APPENDIX A

DISTRACTIONS TO CLASSROOM INSTRUCTION

REGULARLY OCCURRING			IRREGULAR OCCURRING
STUDENT GENERATED	SCHOOL GENERATED	OUT-OF-SCHOOL GENERATED	WITHIN CLASSROOM
11. Students verbally interrupting the teacher	21. Sensory distractions	31. Pre-announced visitors	41. Unexpected visitors
12. Student seeking clarification	22. Student movement due to out-of-classroom activities/programs	32. Special project-related activities (testing, recordkeeping)	42. Communications to the teacher
13. Student-student interactions which are disruptive	23. Clarification of instruction needed by others (non-students)	39. Other	43. Unexpected arrival or departure of students
14. General student noise	24. School management-related activities		44. Misc. student problems
15. Students not concentrating on classroom activities (not on task)	25. Teacher creates distraction		49. Other
16. Student's physical position or location	29. Other		OUT-OF-CLASSROOM
17. Student intentionally attempting to disrupt instruction or challenge rules			51. Upset parent visit
18. Physical disorders to the classroom environment or to students			52. Last moment activities (field trip, assembly, etc.)
19. Other			53. Speakers
			54. School photographs
			55. Student elections
			59. Other

DISTRACTIONS

REGULAR OCCURRING DISTRACTIONS

STUDENT GENERATED

11. *Student verbally interrupting the teacher*

    Students seeking approval
    Students telling of other students bothering them
    Students poking or touching teacher
    Misc. student questions (restroom, feeling ill, etc.)

12. *Student seeking clarification of task*

    Student asking teacher "how to do it"
    Raising and waving hands seeking help

13. *Student - student interactions which are disruptive*

    Student disagreements
    Unorderly sharing (lack of respect for other students while they are trying to share)
    Student discussions which are not related to the instructional task
    Students pushing, shoving, hitting, etc. each other

14. *General student noise*

15. *Students not concentrating on classroom activities (not on task)*

    Students not listening or following instructions (having to repeat instructions)
    Students do not have materials (which they should have -- e.g., pencil)
    General student foolishness and clowning around
    Students playfully running, crawling

16. *Student's physical position or location*

    Wandering students (wasting time)
    Student posture/seating
    Wiggling

17. *Student intentionally attempting to disrupt instruction*

    Student repeating instructions (disobediently -- seeking peer recognition)
    Students attempting to redirect class activities (move the teacher off the subject)

18. *Physical disorders to the classroom environment (e.g., spilt paint, student dragging earphones) or to students (e.g., wet pants, emotional tears, etc.*

19. *Other*

SCHOOL GENERATED

21. *Sensory distraction*

Bells
Fire drills
Gardening activities (noise and visual distractions)
Visual distractions of students or others passing by the classroom windows

22. *Student movement due to out-of-classroom activities/programs*

Media center and library visits
Pullout programs

23. *Clarification of instructions needed by others (non-student)*

Aides/parent volunteers seeking additional instructions or clarification
Teacher giving instructions to aide or parent (teacher initiated)

24. *School management-related activities*

Attendance folders
Assemblies
Preparation for open house

25. *Teacher creates distraction*

29. *Other*

OUT-OF-SCHOOL GENERATED

31. *Pre-announced visitors*

Parent visits
V.I.P visits (announced)

32. *Special project related activities (testing, recordkeeping)*

Recordkeeping for special funded projects
Special project testing

39. *Other*

IRREGULAR OCCURRING DISTRACTIONS

WITHIN CLASSROOM

41. *Unexpected visitors*

    Nurse visits and clinical testing
    Custodian delivery and pickup
    Principal visitation
    Important visitors (unannounced)

42. *Communication to the teacher*

    Notes and messages from other staff members
    Announcement of emergency meeting after school
    Requests (from principal or staff) for teacher to participate in an after school presentation (or a special presentation to a group)

43. *Unexpected arrival or departure of students*

    Family emergency (teacher or student)
    Receiving new students

44. *Misc. student problems*

    Students losing lunch tickets or money (or lunch)
    Inquiry to student on playground
    Sudden student illness (in class or playground)

49. *Other*

OUT-OF-CLASSROOM

51. *Upset parent*

52. *Last moment field trip*

53. *Speakers*

54. *Photographs*

55. *Student elections*

56. *Other*

APPENDIX B

COPING TECHNIQUE CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM

APPENDIX B

COPING TECHNIQUES

ONGOING TEACHER ACTIONS		PREVENTATIVE AND/OR PREPLANNED
VERBAL	NONVERBAL	
11. Teacher giving direct command or instruction (telling)	21. Teacher using body language, gestures and/or facial expressions	31. Reminding students of rules to prevent distractions from happening
12. Teacher complimenting positive behaviors or actions -- as an example of acceptable activities	22. Teacher moving or locating self with the classroom	32. Locating material or arranging classroom environment to reduce/prevent distractions from happening
13. Teacher clarifying or reminding students of rules (How it should be)	23. Teacher physically redirecting students' attention	33. Teacher using positive reinforcement techniques to encourage future appropriate behavior/actions
14. Teacher soliciting students to a behavior change by using varying voice techniques	24. Teacher calling attention to inappropriate behavior (signs, bells, etc.)	34. Teacher using other adults in the classroom to cope with or to prevent distractions
15. Teacher using varying patterns or clues to gain student attention	25. Teacher ignoring distraction (after exhibiting awareness of the distraction)	35. Class discussion of events which are yet to occur or of non-functional events which were disrupted
16. Teacher directing student to another person or location	26. Teacher showing how a task is supposed to be done	36. Teacher using students to help resolve distractions
17. Teacher putting distraction on hold	27. Teacher physically resolves distraction ("fixes it")	39. Other
18. Teacher telling how a task can be accomplished	29. Other	
19. Other		

COPING TECHNIQUES

ONGOING TEACHER ACTIONS

VERBAL

11. *Teacher giving direct command or instruction (telling)*

Redirecting student's attention by calling his name or catching his attention
Direct commands
Calling for class attention (e.g., "all eyes up")
Calling on an inattentive student

12. *Teacher complimenting positive behaviors or actions -- as an example of acceptable activities*

Complimentary techniques (e.g., "Look how nice row 2 is ...")

13. *Teacher clarifying or reminding students of rules (how it should be)*

Questioning technique (e.g., "Children, why am I not answering Johnny?"
Making judgement of "what is fair" (clarifying existing classroom rules)
Directing the students to raise their hands (if they wish to share or have a question)
Reminding students of "rules"
Threats (e.g., "If you don't ___, I will ___")

14. *Teacher soliciting behavior change by using varying voice techniques*

Voice inflection (e.g., loud/soft, harsh/gentle)
Hesitating or stopping in a sentence (or in the middle of a sentence) until students attention is regained -- [could be called a nonverbal technique]

15. *Teacher using varying patterns or clues to gain student attention*

Verbal clues of teacher's mood or health (e.g., "Today I'm in a grouchy mood", "I've got a cold today")
Requesting students to use a "calming technique" (e.g., "Take a slow deep breath", "Put your heads down")
Motivating into appropriate actions ("Get to the rug by the time the song is over")
Counting to bring the class to order (e.g., "I'm counting, 1,2,3, ...")
Kidding - joking techniques (e.g., mimicking a whinning child)
Reading to group (e.g., after recess to calm-down)
Dismissal techniques (to lunch, recess, home)
Management songs

16. *Teacher directing student to another person or location (verbal)*

    Sending student out of classroom
    Dismissal techniques (to lunch, recess, home)
    Directing the student to another person (e.g., "go to the principal")
    Directing the student to sit at another location (e.g., go sit in the corner")

17. *Teacher putting the distraction on "hold" (e.g., "Ill be there in a second")*

18. *Teacher telling how a task can be done (clarifying it)*

19. *Other*

NONVERBAL

21. *Teacher using body language, gestures and/or facial expressions*

    Facial reactions
    Descriptive gestures
    Eye contact
    Gestures
    Signals - hand motions (e.g., "zipper lips")

22. *Teacher moving or locating self within the classroom*

    Location of teacher (e.g., standing back, physically separate)
    Teacher moving around the classroom ("making rounds")
      - during large group instruction
      - during transition periods
    Position of teacher's body (back to wall, eyes toward class)

23. *Teacher physically redirecting students' attention*

    Touching of students
    Redefine students' attention by removing objects

24. *Teacher calling attention to inappropriate behavior*

    Writing student names on board
    Turning lights off
    Ringing bells or other attention getters
    Pausing or waiting techniques
    Signs (e.g., Lucy sign "It's too noisy in here")

25. *Teacher ignoring distraction (after exhibiting awareness of the existence of the distraction)*

26. *Teacher showing how a task is supposed to be accomplished*

27. *Teacher physically resolves distraction (e.g., fixes it, does it herself, goes and gets the materials)*

29. *Other*

PREVENTATIVE AND/OR PREPLANNED

31. *Reminding students of rules to prevent distractions from happening*

Various rule setting experiences (formal and informal)
Designating "off-limits areas"
Signs or indicators of activities (e.g., potty "Stop-Go" sign)
Use of classroom codes (e.g., "Hands-up for silence")
Limiting visitation times (of parents or outside visitors)
Rule of putting heads down
Permissive understandings (e.g., "You can get a drink of water if I'm not . . .") and/or Restrictive understandings (e.g., "You do not bother me when I am on the rug")
Selected bathroom and drink rules (e.g., "No visits to bathroom or drink for the first half-hour after lunch or recess")
Direct the kids to raise their hands (if they need help or wish to show something)
Sitting policies ("Bottoms on the rug" - don't get up on your knees, don't tilt chairs back)
Practice of rules of potential disruptive situations
- "Line-up" practice
- Fire drill
- "Coming to the rug"
- How you go to your chair?
- Going to office
- etc.

Communicate rules of things to not bring to school (e.g., frogs)
Communicate the acceptance of "body language" or gestures (between students) as means of inter-student communications -- to reduce room noise
Clarification of teacher and/or student "space"

32. *Locating materials or arranging classroom environment to reduce/prevent distractions from happening*

Assignment of seats or small group areas
Location (selection of) of teacher during small group activities (e.g., classroom teacher is centrally located during small group activities)
Pull curtains or cover windows with objects to minimize "outside distractions"
Location of materials and supplies (e.g., "Keep the -- in the rack and . . .")
Avoidance of materials/equipment which may cause activity which may be distracting
Use of charts, visual displays and schedules which indicate what students are supposed to do
Making sure that the work and materials provided to students are appropriate for students' interest and abilities (so they don't finish too early or are "frustrated" by overly difficult tasks)
Permit meaningful "extra activities" if/when students finish their required work

33. *Teacher using positive reinforcement techniques to encourage future appropriate behavior/actions*

Good citizenship awards for good behavior
Communication with parents (phone, notes, conferences) of acceptable and expected behavior

34. *Teacher using other adults in the classroom to cope with or prevent distractions*

Use aides to:
- Check students' work and correct problems
- Circulate to be sure students are on task
- Maintain records
- Filter "lower level" classroom/out-of-classroom distractions
- Working with individuals who are having learning problems
- Playground supervision
- Lunchtime supervision
- Communicate standards and rules to substitutes

35. *Class discussion of events which are yet to occur or of non-functional events which were disrupted*

Helping students anticipate what is going to happen (e.g., "Now when we go on the field trip, when we get on the bus . . .")
Asking a class to evaluate a non-functional experience (e.g., "Class, why do you think the classroom burned down today?")

39. *Other*

APPENDIX C

TEACHERS DAILY LOG

APPENDIX C

TEACHER DAILY RESPONSE FORM

During your tape summary of your reading period for today, please respond to the questions below (in the order they are asked). Feel free to include additional factors and conditions which may be of assistance in clarifying the context of your reading instruction today. Please focus your remarks to the time interval when reading instruction was occurring.

1. General assessment of today's instructional experience (e.g. today everything went well because...) were you satisfied with how much of your plans you accomplished and why?
2. Description of classroom environmental conditions which may have affected reading instruction and/or distractions (e.g. weather, special events, etc.)
3. Today what was your most successful distraction/coping technique and why. (During reading)
4. Today what was your least successful distraction/coping technique and why. (During reading)
5. Were there any changes in your coping techniques today? Why?
6. Comment on your mood and physical condition for today.
7. Estimate how much time (in minutes) of your reading instruction was lost today due to distractions.
8. Look down the list of names of the students in your class. Comment on any event, which occurred outside the reading period, which might effect future reading instruction (e.g., teacher reminded student that field trip participation depended on good behavior).
9. Other comments.

APPENDIX D

QUANTITATIVE CHECKLIST

APPENDIX D

QUANTITATIVE CHECKLIST

EVENT	TIME	GROUP	DISTRACTION	CODE	COPING TECHNIQUE	CODE	TIME OFF TASK					FLOW OF INST.					ELIM. OF DIS.			COMMENTS
							<5	<(1')	<(2')	<(4')	>10	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	
								intended task.	The time the teacher is taken of her	Duration of the Distraction — (In seconds)		No apparent break in the instructional flow (distraction ignored)	Distraction mainly to the teacher; doesn't bother the students	Minor distraction to both teacher and most students in the group	Instruction disrupted but teacher brings the group back to task.	Instruction completely disrupted: very difficult or not possible to bring the	Apparent elimination of distraction	Distraction continues at a reduced (acceptable) level	Distraction continues and the teacher uses another technique.	